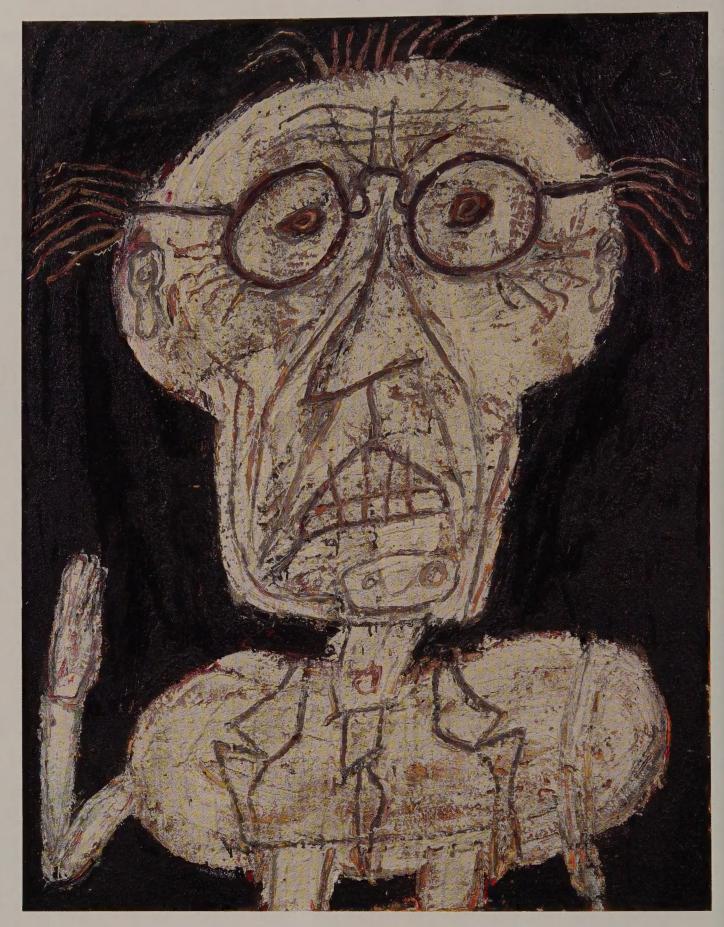






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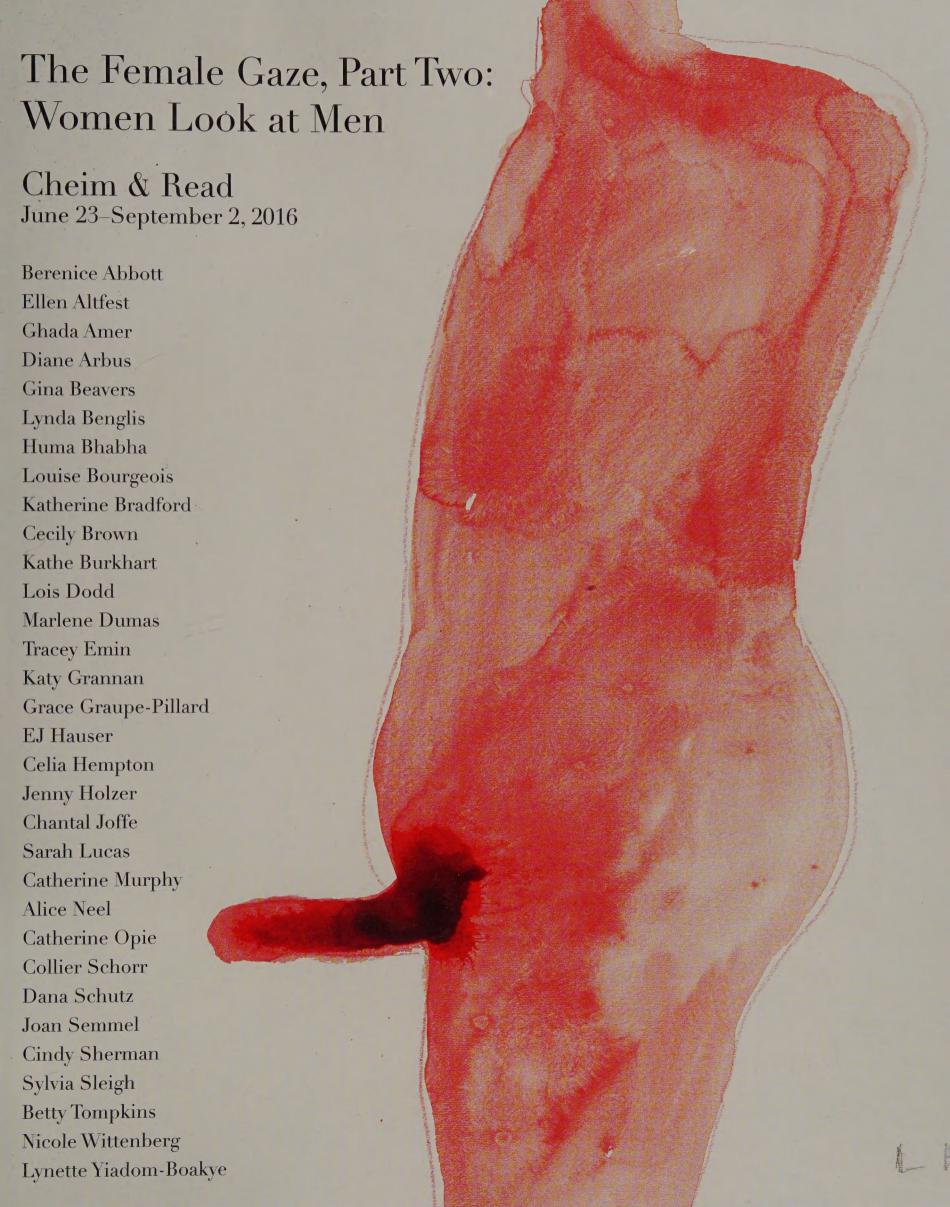
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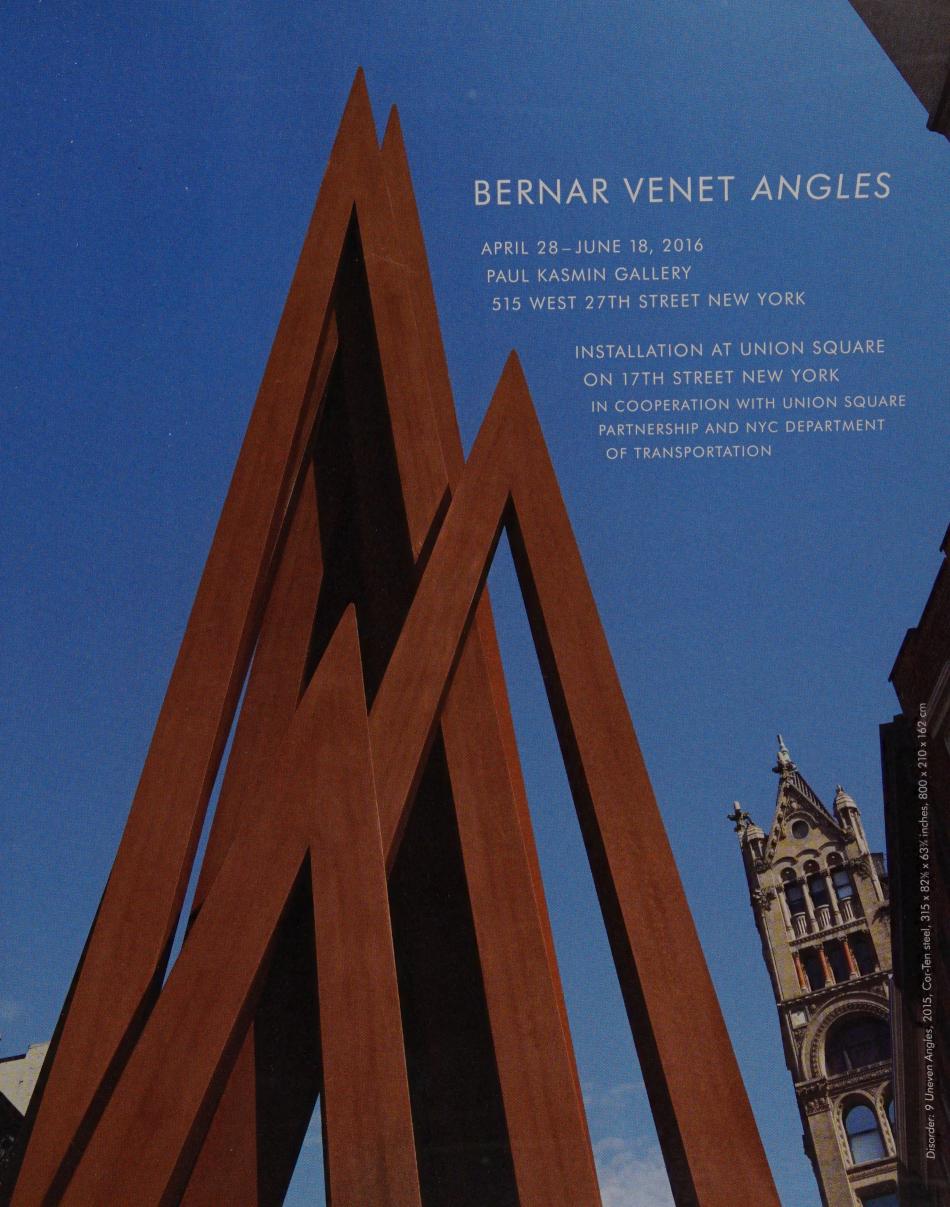
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Scenes from the Knoedler trial illustrated by Victor Juhasz.



Eva and Franco Mattes, Stolen Pieces (from Jean Tinguely), 1995-97.

CRIME

ANYTHING CAN BREAK BAD

FBI Special Agent Meridith Savona has learned the difference between the art world and the Mafia

Barbara Pollack 62

AVANT-GARDE FAIRY TALES

A new organization, the Russian Avant-Garde Research Project, seeks to untangle facts, fakes, and fictions

Sylvia Hochfield 72

AMERICAN BEAUTY

Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and the case of the missing flag

Greg Allen 80

THE BIG FAKE

Behind the scenes of Knoedler gallery's downfall

M. H. Miller 90

WHEN FELONIES BECOME FORM

The secret history of artists who use lawbreaking as their medium

Andrew Russeth 102

TRIAL IMAGE

From the red soles of Lindsay Lohan's Louboutins to Charles Manson lunging at the judge, courtroom artists capture the colors and gestures of justice

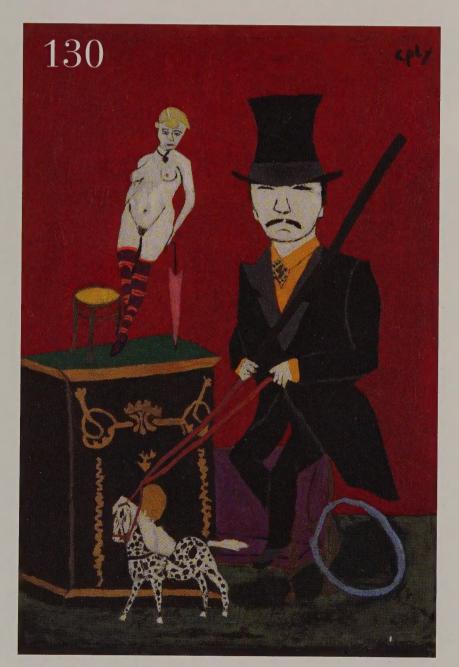
Phoebe Hoban 110



Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg in 1980.



Elisha Cook Jr. and Marie Windsor in Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing*, 1956.



William N. Copley, Well Spent Youth, 1946.

Masthead	1:
Contributors] 4
Editor's Letter	18
Q&A	24
A Talk with Nathaniel Mary Quinn	Bill Powers
PERSPECTIVES	34
Nazis & Con Men & Forgers & Thieves: Art crime in postwar cinema	Andrew Marzoni
HABITAT: MUSEUM GUARD Without museum guards, museums couldn't exit's as simple as that	xist—
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COVER Walter Robinson, Art Crime, 2016, created exclusively for ARTnews. Courtesy the artist.

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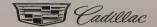
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MARIO SORRENTI



Mario Sorrenti, who photographed Nathaniel Mary Quinn for Bill Powers's Q&A, was born in Naples, Italy, in 1971 and moved to New York in 1981. In his teens, he began documenting his life through photographs and diaries. He began taking photographs professionally and has contributed to many publications, including *Vanity Fair, Vogue*, and *W.* His book *Draw Blood for Proof* (Steidl) was published in 2013.

BARBARA POLLACK



Barbara Pollack, who here interviews the FBI's Meridith Savona, has been writing on contemporary art since 1994 for numerous publications. She is the author of The Wild, Wild East: An American Art Critic's Adventures in China (Blue Kingfisher, 2010). Pollack is also an independent curator and a professor at the School of Visual Arts. She has received

grants from the Asian Cultural Council and from the Creative Capital/ Andy Warhol Foundation.

PHOEBE HOBAN



Phoebe Hoban, who writes about court illustrators in this issue, has written about culture and the arts for such publications as the New York Times, New York magazine, the Wall Street Journal, Vogue, Vanity Fair, and ARTnews. She is the author of Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art (Viking, 1998), published as an e-book in May 2016; Alice Neel: The Art of Not Sitting Pretty (St. Martin's Press, 2010); and Lucian Freud: Eyes Wide Open (New Harvest, 2014).

SYLVIA HOCHFIELD



Sylvia Hochfield looks at the dubious world of Russian avant-garde art. She visited Russia in the late 1980s and had the opportunity to see private collections of Russian modern and contemporary art that were little known to the outside world. As a longtime editor of *ARTnews*, she wrote and edited a number of investigative articles about problems in the field.

WALTER ROBINSON



Walter Robinson, who illustrated the cover of this issue, is an artist and art critic. He has exhibited at numerous New York galleries, and is the subject of a retrospective, which traveled from the University Galleries at Illinois State University to Moore College in Philadelphia and will appear at Jeffrey Deitch gallery in New York in September. Robinson was founding editor of Artnet Magazine and news editor at Art in America.

MIKE FALCO



Mjke Falco is a visual designer hailing from the northern Catskills. He conceived the cover logo for this issue. To pay for his crippling vinyl addiction he works as the lead designer at *InsideHook*, a men's lifestyle publication. He currently resides in Brooklyn with his bouncing baby bunny, a lovely girlfriend, and her stockpile of antique photography equipment.

GREG ALLEN



Greg Allen, who reveals the secret behind a missing Rauschenberg flag, is an artist, writer, and filmmaker, and has published his blog, greg.org: the making of, since 2001. Through his Utah-based nonprofit, The Jetty Foundation, Allen bid in 2011 for the expired lease on state land under Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty. Allen's publications include The Deposition of Richard Prince (Bookhorse, 2012).

EMILY RAPPAPORT



Emily Rappaport, who covers the gallery scene in Los Angeles for this issue, has lived and worked in L.A., New York, New Haven, Portland, and Mexico City. She's interested in WPA murals, pre-Hispanic miniatures, the land art of the American West, and the things her friends make. Her work has appeared in ARTnews, Flash Art, and Artsy.

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Charles Re-Visited, 2015, Black charcoal, soft pastel, oil pastel, paint stick, gouache on Coventry Vellum Paper, 50 x 38 in

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uins have been ruined," proclaimed an early April headline in the *New York Times*. The *Times* had sent a photographer to Palmyra, the 2,000-year-old archaeological site in Syria that had recently been reclaimed from ISIS forces, and he found the Lion of al-Lat and the Temple of Bel to have been among the victims of the terrorist group. The destruction and looting of antiquities during the Syrian Civil War—and the question of how much money ISIS raises through their illegal trade—has been the biggest art-crime story in recent months. But it is far from the only story. Thirteen arrests were made in Moldova and Italy in connection with the theft of works by Rubens and Tintoretto. Federal agents seized what they said where illicit antiquities in New York on the eve of Asia Week. Auctioneers and porters from a Paris auction house went on trial, accused of stealing hundreds of objects, including artworks by Courbet, Matisse, and Chagall. Gang members in the U.K. were imprisoned for the theft of multiple pieces, including jades and a rhino horn, collectively valued at some £57 million. A Picasso painting stolen from the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2001 and recovered in 2014 finally went back on view. As this issue went to press in mid-April, the FBI's Art Crime Team announced that it would offer a \$25,000 reward for information relating to seven Andy Warhol Campbell's soup can prints swiped from the Springfield Art Museum in Springfield, Missouri.

Art crime is a topic of perpetual interest. See Art Crime: Terrorists, Tomb Raiders, Forgers and Thieves, Noah Charney's recent anthology of essays by various authors and experts. (It was Charney's organization, the Association for Research into Crimes against Art, that organized a symposium on ISIS and the illegal antiquities trade in London in February.) See also Alan Hirsch's new book, The Duke of Wellington, Kidnapped!, published in April by Counterpoint Press, on the riveting true story behind the famous 1961 theft of Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from London's National Gallery. And consider the continuing fascination of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum heist.

This magazine is no stranger to art crime. Throughout its 114-year history, various thieves, forgers, looters, and all-around art-world ne'er-do-wells have provided ample fodder for feature articles. (In 1966 longtime editor and publisher of *ARTnews* Milton Esterow published the widely admired *The Art Stealers*, a compendium of what were at the time the world's biggest thefts.) For our Summer 2016 quarterly issue, with its noirish cover specially created by artist Walter Robinson, we have gone beyond crimes against art to explore art's broader intersection with crime of various sorts. In these pages you'll not only find M. H. Miller's report on the Knoedler trial and its aftermath, Barbara Pollack's interview with an agent in the FBI's Art Squad, and Sylvia Hochfield's look at new methods for weeding out fakes and forgeries of Russian avant-garde paintings from museum collections, you will also encounter *ARTnews* co-executive editor Andrew Russeth's examination of the long tradition of the artist as criminal, from Cellini to Cattelan, and Greg Allen's meditation on the mysterious disappearance of a Jasper Johns flag painting from a Robert Rauschenberg Combine. Phoebe Hoban interviews court illustrators—artists in their own right—about their experiences depicting high-profile trials, and Andrew Marzoni meanders through the history of the Hollywood art-heist film, a genre unto itself, and a suitably dramatic and highly visual foray into a realm at once vivid and murky.



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NATHANIEL MARY QUINN

"ART DERIVES FROM EVERYTHING IN LIFE"

INTERVIEW WITH BILL POWERS PORTRAIT BY MARIO SORRENTI

Bill Powers: Do you consider your paintings to be portraits? Nathaniel Mary Quinn: In many respects a portrait is an attempt to duplicate a visual physicality. I'm trying to bring to the surface what I feel; it's more of a psychological excavation of the internalized world of a human being.

BP: The clothing depicted in your work often harks back to an older era. Is that intentional?

NMQ: Chicago is known for being a cold city. It's called the Windy City not only because of the harsh weather but in part because of the city's politics. I grew up there, in a very impoverished community. When you grow up poor, you make attempts to communicate to the public that you're not as poor as people may think you are. That's why you might wear a fake-fur hat or a fake-fur coat.

BP: And what's interesting about that projection to you, as an artist? **NMQ:** I find that these types of figures are not normally represented in the art world because they are from the ghetto or the periphery of culture. But that doesn't mean that these people are any less important. I love the idea of putting a pimp on the walls of the Whitney. And I did it! When [collector and Whitney trustee] Beth DeWoody invited me to be a part of their annual auction, I donated a piece called *Richard* [2014], which was named after my brother, who was big into fashion. He went out of his way to show people that he wasn't broke. I presented him as a real gangster-like pimp.

BP: You enjoyed the subversive aspect.

NMQ: Absolutely. And I don't change who [my subjects] are. I don't try to make them more palatable to any given audience.

BP: How do you start one of your paintings?

NMQ: I normally start with the nose or the nucleus of the piece. It could be the neck or the hat. I'm looking for harmony. The composition has to be well balanced.

BP: Hailing from Illinois, were you influenced at all by the Chicago Imagists?

NMQ: I'm very much influenced by music production. I mean, obviously I'm influenced by painters as well. However, art derives from everything in life. I take walks a lot because I'm always collecting information. I live in [Brooklyn's] Bed-Stuy; I speak with many of the drug dealers, pimps, prostitutes—I have conversations with all kinds of people. They hustle. I don't judge them. I take their energy with me and figure out ways to employ it in my work. It helps me to stay connected to what I would call real life. In the same way, I know a bunch of wealthy collectors now. That energy, too, goes into my work. I like intersecting those worlds. I see them as reciprocal.

BP: Before you were supporting yourself as an artist, you worked with at-risk youth.

NMQ: Yeah, I was a counselor at this place [in downtown Manhattan] right off of Canal Street. Young kids, from 13 to 18, interfacing with the criminal justice system, many of them facing jail time.

BP: What was your objective, working with these kids?

NMQ: I found a direct link to functional illiteracy. Many of them couldn't read or write. They knew how to navigate their limited surroundings. I taught a literacy class even though I had no training in it whatsoever. At first it was rough: kids cussing me out, threatening me.

BP: They were probably suspicious that you were trying to brainwash them or something.

NMQ: I wanted to show them a different route in life without compromising their experiences, how to translate what they'd learned into the workforce. Let's say one of the kids had been selling drugs. I'd tell him, "OK, so you know how to build a clientele, manage your money, schedule. People go to business school to acquire these skills. There's nothing wrong with your aim. There's something wrong with your target."

BP: Would you ever take them to galleries?

NMQ: All the time, because I knew they didn't feel comfortable in spaces like that. I taught them that the gallery is open to the public. You don't have to pay to walk in. Just look around. I remember I took a group to Metro Pictures one day to see a Gary Simmons show. We looked at the price list. They couldn't believe someone could sell an artwork for \$90,000. They'd never been exposed to these opportunities.

BP: But you were also teaching them how to read and write? **NMQ:** We would walk by random restaurants—Subway, McDonald's, Wendy's—they knew all the places. But then we'd get back to the classroom and I'd write out the same names on the chalkboard and the kids couldn't read it. They only knew the names from the logos. They had memorized the signifiers.

OPPOSITE Nathaniel Mary Quinn photographed on March 8, 2016, in New York City.

But I'd also try to highlight the beauty in that, how they'd created their own language to survive. Language is just a code you have to crack in order to navigate the world. And there's a plurality in language. I'll never forget the day this kid read his first sentence. It made me cry. I hugged him and said, "Now you have something no one can steal from you: your education. That's intellectual property." So, yeah, I worked with at-risk youth for ten years.

BP: Who is an artist that has had a profound impact on you? **NMQ:** I love how Caravaggio manipulated light, how he's able to place figures within darkness. Hey, Caravaggio was an at-risk youth. He'd get into duels and have beef with people.

BP: When I interviewed John Currin last year, he told a story about Caravaggio and Guido Reni almost getting into a fistfight about who invented raking light.

NMQ: See! Caravaggio was a ruffian, but also a very talented painter. John Currin is also an influence, and Lucian Freud and Jim Dine. I love Jim Dine's drawings of tools and the way he renders a necktie. He knows how to control the weight of a line.

BP: Marlene Dumas says that to draw something is to show its resistance.

NMQ: Often you add weight to a line in order to show tension. Look at a painting like John Currin's *Big Hands* [2010] and you see how he's captured the weight of her shoulders. Currin understands fragility and tension.

BP: Can we talk about the emotional presence in your paintings? **NMQ:** I believe in life you are an amalgam of numerous experiences. You are built from a history of joy, sadness, ups, and downs. I'm trying to articulate the essence of that. All of that added up together is nothing more than a forest that stands in front of the truth. So I'm walking through the forest trying to get there. Subjective perception is simply allegiance—unknowingly—to your own ego. And your ego disallows you from seeing the collective interdependence of all people.

BP: You said that you get visions sometimes.

NMQ: I get visions almost every day. The vision is a picture of a whole image. I never write them down. And I never forget them. Every piece I've made was born from a vision. I'm talking about the style of work I make now. Earlier on I was obsessive, trying to make intellectual connections and show theoretical underpinnings behind the work. It was tiring and laborious. I didn't want to live my life that way. I wanted to be free. I went to therapy for four years to deal with the loss of my mother, the loss of my family. What was that pain about? The detachment does something to you.

BP: For people who don't know your personal history, you had a pretty traumatic family experience in high school.

NMQ: My mom passed away when I was a freshman in high school, my first month at boarding school. I went back to Chicago for the services and then returned to school. Thanksgiving came around and when I went home to see my family, the apartment was

empty. My four older brothers and my dad had left without notifying me as to where they were going.

BP: So you never saw them again?

NMQ: Only last year did one of my brothers, Charles, finally contact me after hearing this podcast I did. He didn't know what happened to our father. I learned that my brother Richard had died of AIDS and that my other brother was a full-blown alcoholic living on the streets. I asked Charles a lot of questions. I told him that I forgave him, but I don't think we can ever have a relationship again. Not after that kind of rupture. Listen, I was very lucky as a kid. I was showered with love. My mom used to pray over me, pray over my body. She would ask God to watch over me after she was dead and gone. To this day, I believe that my mother conspires for my success. Whatever happens to me in life, things always seem to work out.

BP: You have a new piece called *Ethan* [2016], where the body originated from an image of Ai Weiwei.

NMQ: It's not about his biography at all. I like how you can see time and gravity on his body, a body you imagine was once strong. The real Ethan was a tough guy I knew from Chicago. We lived in the same project building. He was nice to me, but you didn't want to get on his bad side. He was very burdened by his circumstances. Ethan had a sad disposition. He was a tumbler, like me. I did gymnastics for 13 years. So Ethan and I would do back flips together. I was always a better tumbler than he was, which may be why I won his admiration. Ethan was sort of a protector for me.

BP: Were you a tough guy?

NMQ: Not really. But you had to be tough in that community. You couldn't let anyone take you short. I was in this group called the Jesse White Tumblers. Jesse White is the Illinois Secretary of State who started this program to get kids off the street. Most of my teammates were from the projects—primarily the Cabrini-Green projects—and some of them were superbly dangerous. We used to perform at the Chicago Bulls halftime shows. I even got to meet Michael Jordan.

BP: While Jordan was still in the NBA?

NMQ: Yeah, man. Our locker rooms were right next to the players'. We'd come out into the hallway to stretch, and out would roll Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman. I was five feet away from Michael Jordan! I had never seen a physical specimen like that. The guy was beautiful. He was built like a machine. A lot of kids in the projects would try to get on the tumbling team. You got paid. They'd travel us around. We'd sign autographs. My mom first put me onto tumbling. She brought me to Mr. McClain, our grammar-school gym teacher, and said, "I want you to watch over my baby so he doesn't get caught up in these streets." Eventually I became the team captain.

Nathaniel Mary Quinn's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Pace Gallery in London and the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts in Brooklyn. His show at M+B gallery in Los Angeles runs from May 13 through June 25.



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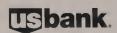




Women of Abstract Expressionism is organized by the Denver Art Museum. It is generously funded by Merle Chambers; Henry Luce Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; the Ponzio Family; U.S. Bank; Christie's; Harmes C. Fishback Foundation Trust; Barbara Bridges; DAM Contemporaries, a support group of the Denver Art Museum; Dedalus Foundation; Bette MacDonald; Joan Mitchell Foundation; Helen Frankenthaler Foundation; Deborah Remington Charitable Trust for the Visual Arts; the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign; and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. Promotional support is provided by \$280 Magazine, CBSA, Corneast Spotlight, and The Denver Post. Elaine de Kooning, Bullfight, 1959. Oil on canvas; 77-5/8 x 131-1/4 x 1-1/8 in. Denver Art Museum: Vance H. Kirkland Acquisition Fund. © Elaine de Kooning Trust.











Art crime in postwar cinema

BY ANDREW MARZONI

n August 21, 1961, Francisco Goya's Portrait of the Duke of Wellington (1812–14) was stolen from the National Gallery in London. The British government had purchased the painting 19 days earlier for £140,000, matching the bid of New York collector Charles Wrightsman so as to prevent the painting from leaving the U.K. It was recovered four years later, when a retired bus driver named Kempton Bunton returned the painting and confessed to the crime. Portrayed in the media as an unassuming and repentant Robin Hood, Bunton was acquitted of all charges except for the theft of the frame, for which he served three months in prison. In actuality, the painting was stolen by Bunton's son John, who confessed upon his arrest for an unrelated offense in 1969. The Portrait of the Duke of Wellington has hung in the National Gallery ever since its return in 1965.

PERSPECTIVES

But it was while hidden in a cupboard in Bunton's Newcastle flat, and not in the National Gallery, that Goya's portrait made its film debut. In Dr. No (1962), the first adaptation of Ian Fleming's 007 novels, the painting can be seen mounted in the den of the film's eponymous villain, subject to the raised eyebrow of Sean Connery's James Bond. Despite the film's suggestion otherwise, Dr. No's Goya is not stolen, but forged: hearing the news of the recent theft of the painting, the film's production designer, Ken Adam, who passed away earlier this year, ordered a slide of the work from the National Gallery and reproduced it himself. A clever wink typical of Bondmovie camp, the portrait symbolically inaugurates the cinema of art crime, a distinctly postwar phenomenon whose forgeries and thefts have less to say about art than they do about Hollywood conventions. Like everything in show business, art is money. The Goya helps in depicting Dr. No as a bad guy, but his possession of a hot painting pales in comparison to his plans of world domination.

Art crime existed before the Second World War, but Hitler's systematic theft and destruction of Europe's great collections serves as a kind of year zero for its representation in popular culture. This subgenre persists to this day, evidence of the perception by Hollywood—not to mention the wider public—that the art world is largely a criminal operation, populated with white-collar crooks and shallow victims.

It is estimated that as few as 5 to 10 percent of stolen artworks are ever recovered, and the grand scale of the Nazis' crime has left a vast space for speculation about what may have happened to great paintings by Rembrandt, Vermeer, and van Gogh—an imaginative gap which Hollywood has taken upon itself to fill. As in the case of *Dr. No*, cinema provides stolen masterpieces a fictional afterlife, assigning them to an array of filthy rich villains: Modigliani's *Woman with a Fan* (1919) and Picasso's *Le pigeon aux petits pois* (1911), both unrecovered, make appearances in the collection of Bond nemesis Ernst Stavro Blofeld (Christoph Waltz) in Sam Mendes's *Spectre* (2015). Cinema theorizes the lives and motives of a brand of criminals so rarely brought to justice, alternately glorifying and vilifying the forgers, thieves, and black marketeers who operate in the shadows of the art market.

In the 1950s film noir gave birth to the heist movie: Jules Dassin's *Rififi* (1955), Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956), and Lewis Milestone's *Ocean's 11* (1960), the Rat Pack vehicle rebooted with great success by Steven Soderbergh in the early 2000s. The subgenre tends to feature actors in pairs or ensemble and relies heavily on plot twists. As such, the art-heist film—which has an antecedent in Godfrey Grayson's *The Fake* (1953)—often includes both forger and thief, the narrative frequently hinging on the uncertainty of whether a stolen artwork is authentic or fake. This trope first appears in Ronald Neame's *Gambit* and William Wyler's *How to Steal a Million*, both released in 1966.

How to Steal a Million and Gambit are remarkably similar films. Both showcase the unlikely romance that develops between a British art thief and his reluctant accomplice, in each case an exotic beauty named Nicole. In How to Steal a Million, Audrey Hepburn

орроsіте Magali Noël in Jules Dassin's Rififi, 1955.

plays Nicole Bonnet, daughter of renowned Parisian collector Charles Bonnet (Hugh Griffith). The elder Bonnet, we learn, is also a master forger, which first becomes a problem when Nicole catches Simon Dermott (Peter O'Toole) red-handed, attempting to lift one of Bonnet's prized van Goghs (which is actually a Bonnet), and later when Nicole's father lends a Venus by Cellini to the Kléber-Lafayette Museum, whose director unwittingly gains Bonnet's permission to subject the sculpture to forensic testing, a prerequisite for the million-dollar insurance policy. Fearing exposure of the inauthenticity of her family's collection, Nicole convinces Simon to help her steal back the sculpture, carved by her paternal grandfather and modeled after her grandmother, to whom Nicole bears a striking resemblance. Recognizing this likeness, Simon gives the sculpture to his romantic rival, American businessman Davis Leland (Eli Wallach), whose lust for Nicole is only surpassed by his lust for the Venus. Ironically, the sculpture is but a mere copy of Nicole, the true work of art, who is delighted and not displeased when Simon reveals his identity: a forgery expert with degrees in art history, chemistry, and criminology, hired to investigate the authenticity of Bonnet's collection. The Venus was Simon's first heist, as it was Nicole's. Criminals together, they give Bonnet a mild scolding, and with his blessing, live happily ever after.

Gambit's Nicole Chang (Shirley MacLaine, in unfortunate yellowface) also shares her visage with a sculpture—this time, a bronze casting of Chinese Empress Li Zu'e—and she too falls in love with the man who steals that sculpture, cat burglar Harry Dean (Michael Caine). Dean and his partner, dealer and forger Emile Fournier (John Abbott), pick Nicole out of a crowd of dancers in a Hong Kong nightclub and offer her \$5,000 to travel to Dammuz, a fictional Middle Eastern city, in the role of Dean's wife. Dammuz is home to a luxurious hotel owned by the richest man in the world, Ahmed Shahbandar (Herbert Lom, in brown makeup). MacLaine's face is even more common than Hepburn's, it seems, as it is also identical to that of Shahbandar's dearly departed wife, and Dean hopes that he can use Nicole as a diversion in order to steal the sculpture, worth an undisclosed but presumably very large amount of money. Dean's hopes prove elusive, however: his Cockney accent undermines his noble pretense as Sir Harold Dean, his Arab hosts turn out to be less primitive and more cosmopolitan than he imagined, and Nicole is no China doll, either. Like her counterpart in How to Steal a Million, MacLaine's Nicole is as apt a thief as her future husband, and while the pair fail to nab the original Li Zu'e (Shahbandar keeps an elaborately guarded decoy on display), it's no matter: the newspaper headlines are enough to convince buyers on the black market that any of Fournier's previously fabricated copies of the bust could be the real thing, voiding any unique value to which the authentic object might lay claim.

In a romantic inversion of the film noir femme fatale, Hepburn and MacLaine's characters propose women as the objets d'art worthiest of breaking the law for, a purer commodity than sculpture or painting, vain playthings of eccentric billionaires and mustachioed Frenchmen. In these films, art is a McGuffin, the museum just another crime scene, like Jamaica in *Dr. No*, or

Las Vegas in Ocean's 11. It is for this reason unsurprising that art crime is ripe territory for the Hollywood remake: there are only so many settings, after all. Michael Hoffman remade Gambit in 2012 with Colin Firth in Caine's role, Cameron Diaz as a thankfully deorientalized update of the MacLaine character, and a screenplay by Joel and Ethan Coen. Several cinematic heists of the 1960s were reconceived as art heists decades later. In Norman Jewison's The Thomas Crown Affair (1968) the titular character (Steve McQueen) robs banks and not the Met, as he does in John McTiernan's 1999 remake with Pierce Brosnan, on furlough from playing 007. Soderbergh's Ocean's Twelve (2004) takes the action from the casino floor to the Galleria D'Arte in Rome, where Danny Ocean (George Clooney) and his entourage compete to steal the Fabergé Imperial Coronation Egg before Baron François Toulour (Vincent Cassell), a.k.a. "The Night Fox," a French capoeira-master version of Thomas Crown, does. Each of these films is, in some way, a forgery of an earlier one, and some copies are better than the originals. But as genre films, they are all in conversation, stealing from one another all the time. Soderbergh takes Jewison's split-screen and uses it in the Ocean's movies; in another heist movie, Out of Sight (1998), Soderbergh restages Wyler's famous shot of O'Toole shining a flashlight up Hepburn's exposed knee, in a scene with Clooney and Jennifer Lopez in the trunk of a car.



Picasso, in a possibly apocryphal statement, said that the best artists steal—an idea that Orson Welles runs with in his 1973 essay film, *F for Fake*. Welles's pseudo-documentary about confirmed forgers Elmyr de Hory, who later committed suicide in Spain while awaiting extradition to France, and Clifford Irving, author of a hoax "autobiography" of Howard Hughes, makes the relationship between art crime and the cinema explicit. All art is fakery: it is its essential artificiality that moves us. The best films dealing in art crime are those that take on the philosophical heft of their subject matter. In Abbas Kiarostami's *Certified Copy* (2010), writer James

ABOVE Film still from Stanley Kubrick's The Killing, 1956.

Miller (William Shimell) preaches a gospel similar to Welles's as he tours Tuscany with an antiques dealer (Juliette Binoche) who may or may not be his wife, playing ambiguous roles in a shifting performance of identity. Ocean's wife, Tess (Julia Roberts), aids the heist in Ocean's Twelve by trading in on her resemblance to none other than Julia Roberts in order to gain access to the museum. Tom Ripley (Dennis Hopper) in Wim Wenders's neo-noir The American Friend (1977) deals in forged art in Hamburg until he is pressured into murder, enlisting terminally ill framer Jonathan Zimmermann (Bruno Ganz) to pay back a debt owed to gangster Raoul Minot (Gérard Blain). By casting renowned directors— Hopper and Blain, but also Samuel Fuller, Jean Eustache, and Nicholas Ray as the forger Derwatt-Wenders solidifies the alliance between filmmaker and criminal. Wenders's film is adapted from Patricia Highsmith's 1974 novel Ripley's Game, but the elements of the art world are taken from Ripley Under Ground (1970), to which Wenders did not have the rights. Wenders reports that Highsmith was initially "disturbed" by his theft, but upon a second viewing wrote him that the film "captured the essence of that Ripley character better than any of the other films," effectively authenticating it with her signature.

While these filmmakers' interests in the theoretical implications of art crime are symptomatic of postmodern attitudes toward art (no more so than in Raúl Ruiz's 1979 *The Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting*), for others, crime is crime, inexcusable without exception. In Clooney's A-list flop *The Monuments Men* (2014), onetime Ripley Matt Damon plays Lieutenant James Granger, a reproduction of former Met director James Rorimer, who rescues the Ghent Altarpiece from the Nazis and manages to avoid sleeping with Cate Blanchett's Claire Simon, a sexy stand-in for art historian and partisan Rose Valland (Granger has a wife and kids at home). In his off-screen life, Rorimer was one of the early proponents of radiographic examination—the very technology that threatens the forgeries of Bonnet and de Hory. Clooney's film insists that art is sacred enough to be worth risking human life.

The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014), Wes Anderson's comedy about the theft of a prized Renaissance painting called Boy with Apple, begs to differ: though Boy with Apple hangs in the lobby of the Zubrowka hotel long after the war that took the life of concierge M. Gustave (Ralph Fiennes), the painting's rightful owner, the old Europe in which it was painted no longer remains. Boy with Apple is a McGuffin, but a significant one, the absurd painting attempting but failing to distract from the true work of art, the hotel itself, which Anderson brings alive with baroque choreography. Stripped of its occupants, their eccentric costumes and personal dramas presumably exterminated, the postwar Grand Budapest Hotel is nothing but an empty frame belonging to a nostalgic loner. Art is a reproduction of life, Anderson seems to argue, and though it may manage to preserve the aura of a people, a time, a place, it is inevitably less vibrant than the souls who inspire it. Out of place and ignored in drab Soviet surroundings, Boy with Apple is evidence of a crime—a poignant reminder that there is a world outside of cinema, and that in that world, crime doesn't pay.

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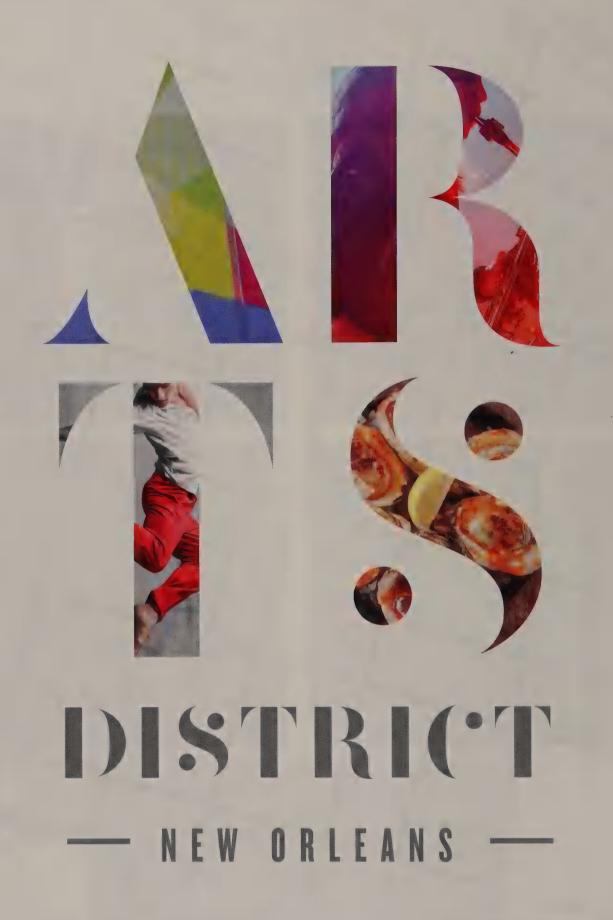




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HABITAT:

THE MUSEUM

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHERINE McMAHON

Without museum guards, museums couldn't exist—it's as simple as that. For our Crime issue, we turned the spotlight on the people who not only act as key players in the implementation of an institution's security system, protecting works from theft and damage, but also perform a critical role in the museum-going experience.

useum security, above all, abides by Murphy's Law. "If you think it's not going to happen, it's going to happen. You have to expect the unexpected," said Pat Natale, director of security at the New Museum in New York. The 2013 show "Chris Burden: Extreme Measures" included an artwork made up of multiple gold bars, so the museum had beefed up security—there were armed guards, panic alarms, motion detectors, audible alarms, and even fake walls. "In the end, the security protocol became as much a part of the piece as the piece itself," Natale said.

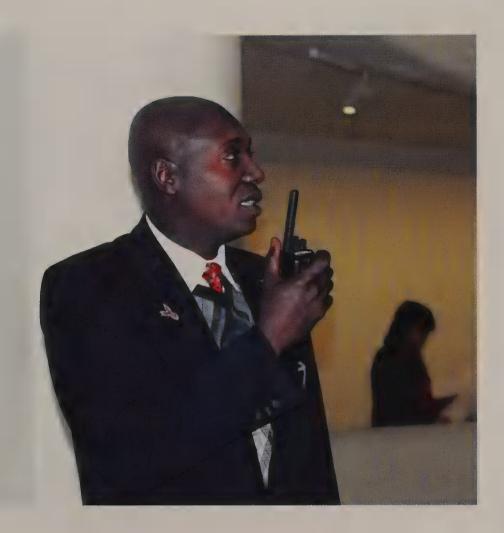
Going a step further, Dick Drent, former corporate security manager at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, codeveloped a new form of security for the institution in 2013 based on a type of observational analysis called the ORRI Methodology, which uses elements of predictive profiling (an evaluation of whether a person, object, or situation poses a threat). Drent considers the role of a museum guard to be a proactive one: "We prevent things from happening before they happen," he said.

But museum guards often transcend their roles as silent watchdogs, and many institutions encourage their security staff to engage in a dialogue with visitors about the art. "When I first came here, the philosophy was that the museum security officers were to be like the statues," said Christopher Kunkel, head of security and safety services at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. "Security

ABOVE William Gross, lead gallery officer at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, standing next to Yoshida Hōmei's *Arayori (A Peasant Woman)*, ca. 1915, one of his favorite works in the museum.







"There's a kind of mental endurance and long-term, durational presence that's required to stay in tune with the work and the space."

- J. Soto, Dia: Chelsea

officers were supposed to stand along the walls and say nothing to anyone." That isolation taught him that a more involved approach can enhance a visitor's experience, and he implemented a system in which guards engage more with the public.

The many hours guards spend with the art can result in an unusual degree of familiarity. Linda Harris, who has worked as a guard at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia for 14 years, often finds she can recite the sound tracks of the video art in the galleries she patrols. "When they finish installing, I stand there and memorize the piece. I only have to look at it a couple of times," she said. "When we had an exhibition of Kalup Linzy's work [in 2010], I felt like I had a whole audience to work with. I sat there until I memorized each of the voices in his video."

The job is a kind of endurance test. Guards are on their feet during busy openings, events, and slow days alike, which requires both physical and mental stamina. As Chad Lawrence, who works as a guard at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., noted, "It's a solitary position, and you really have to feel comfortable being inside your head for long stretches of time. For some, it can be incredibly draining."

A common theme among the guards I spoke to was a deep appreciation of the art they protect, and it's worth recalling that many artists have done stints in museum security. Artist Ellen Siebers, a gallery attendant at Dia: Chelsea, watched the paintings



ABOVE (top) Guggenheim senior security officer Ennel Agyemany. ABOVE (bottom) J. Soto, gallery attendant at Dia:Chelsea. Opposite (clockwise from top left) Gallery officers Dennis Cloutier and Gene Antonelli at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; "You have to be very present for this job all day. If you're having an off day, that can really be a challenge," said Ellen Siebers, gallery attendant at Dia:Chelsea; Allen Accoo, Lisa Richardson, and Terry Parker, staff at the Studio Museum in Harlem, in front of Adam Pendleton's Collected (Flamingo George), 2009.

44 HABITAT

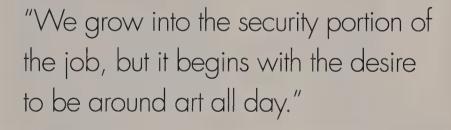


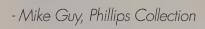


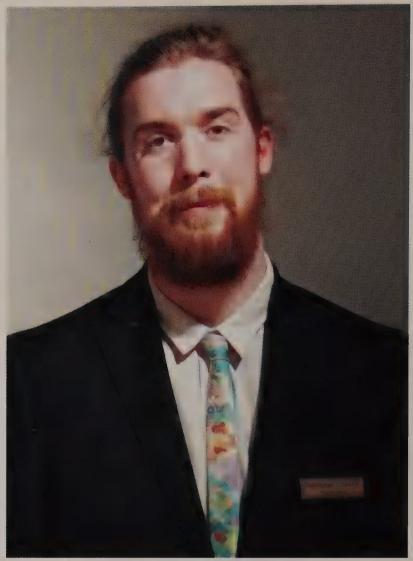


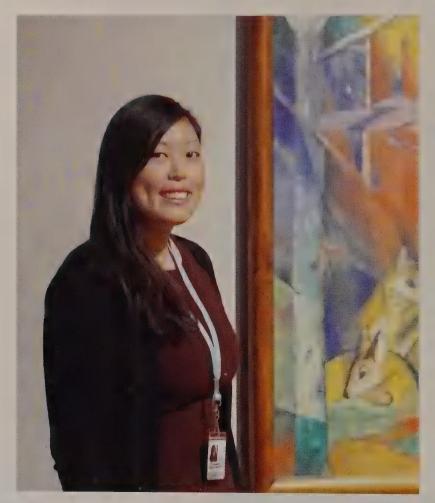
















OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Neda Amouzadeh, Mike Guy, Mary Woodward, and Chad Lawrence from the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. "Contemporary pieces are more difficult to guard because they sometimes look interactive," said Amouzadeh. Mike Guy said the most important part of the job is "finding the balance between security and visitor experience." Above (top) Linda Harris lives in North Philadelphia and works at ICA Philadelphia. Above (bottom) Pat Natale, director of security at the New Museum, said, "You can't be prepared enough. You have to expect the unexpected."

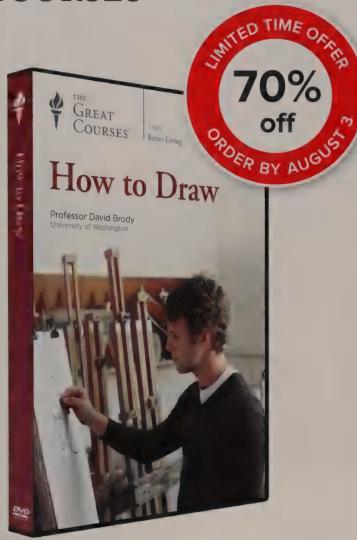
of Robert Ryman—who was himself a guard at the Museum of Modern Art in the early 1950s—go up on the walls for a recent Ryman exhibition. "There's another level of intimacy with the work when you see how it's installed," she said. "As a painter, having time to finally learn all the little things that you can't really find in texts is great."

Dia has a long tradition of artists serving as attendants; Amy Gartrell, Nate Lowman, and Jeremy Sigler have all worked there. Siebers's colleague J. Soto, a performance artist, feels his artistic practice informs his role as a gallery attendant. "I think it plays into an idea of time, and witnessing how guests view the work and move through the space," he said. "There's a kind of mental endurance and long-term, durational presence that's required to stay in tune with the work and the space."

Guards also serve as the eyes and ears of the curatorial staff, acting as intermediaries between the exhibitions and curatorial departments. K. Shannon Ali, director of visitor services at the Studio Museum in Harlem, likes to keep things in the family. "When I first came to the museum, they had a few officers and contracted security, and I immediately got rid of the contracted security," she said. "When guards are hired through the institution itself, they have a vested interest."

HABITAT 47





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An American Romantic: The Art of Luigi Lucioni



Luigi Lucioni (American, 1900-1988), Within the Birch Grove,

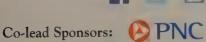
Homeland: Photographs by Barry M. Goldwater



Barry M. Goldwater (American, 1909-1998), The Valley (detail),

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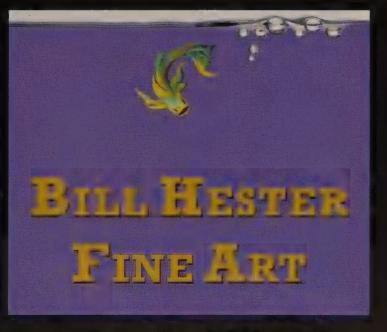
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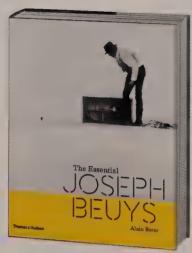
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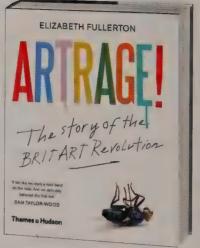
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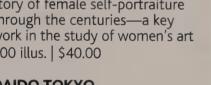


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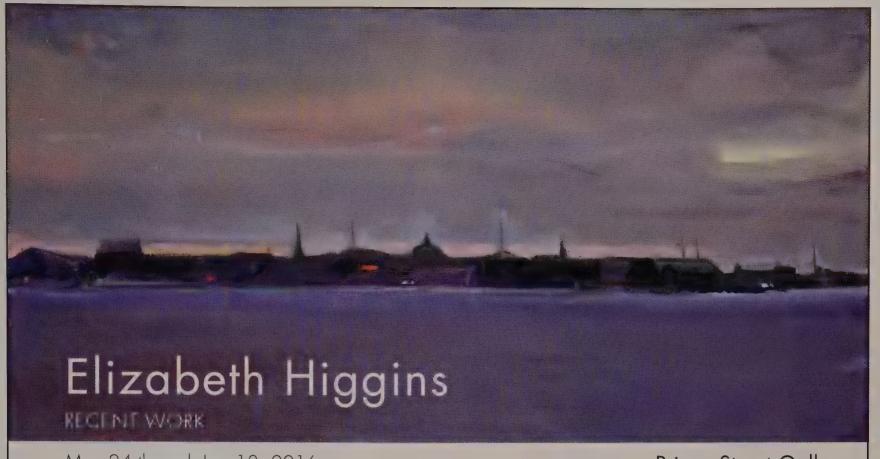
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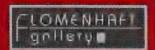


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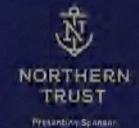
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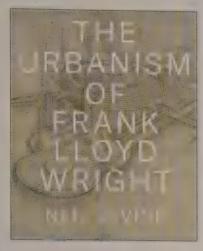
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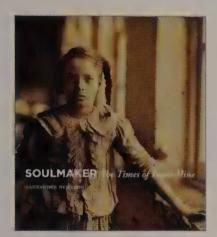
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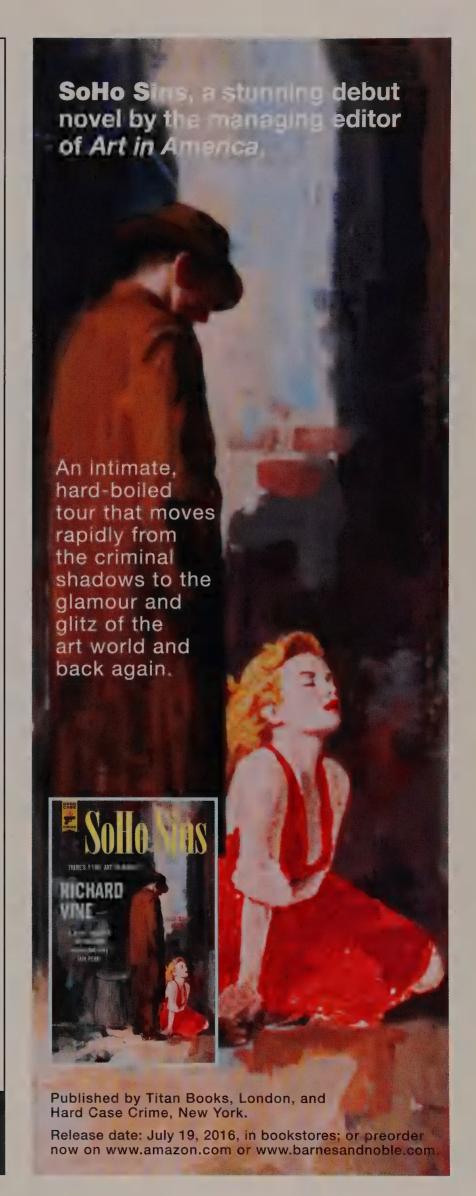
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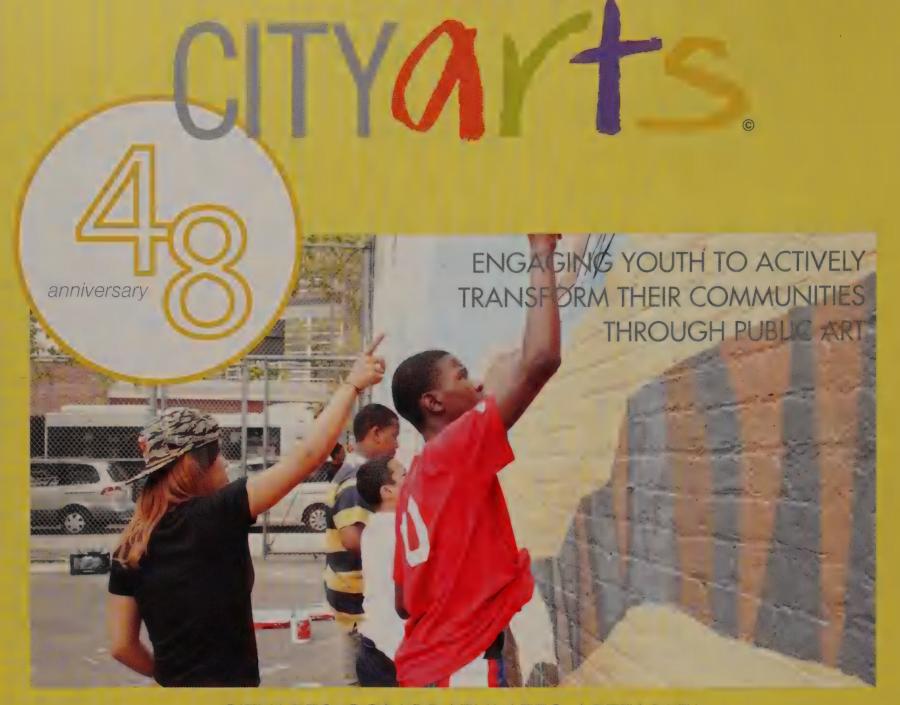
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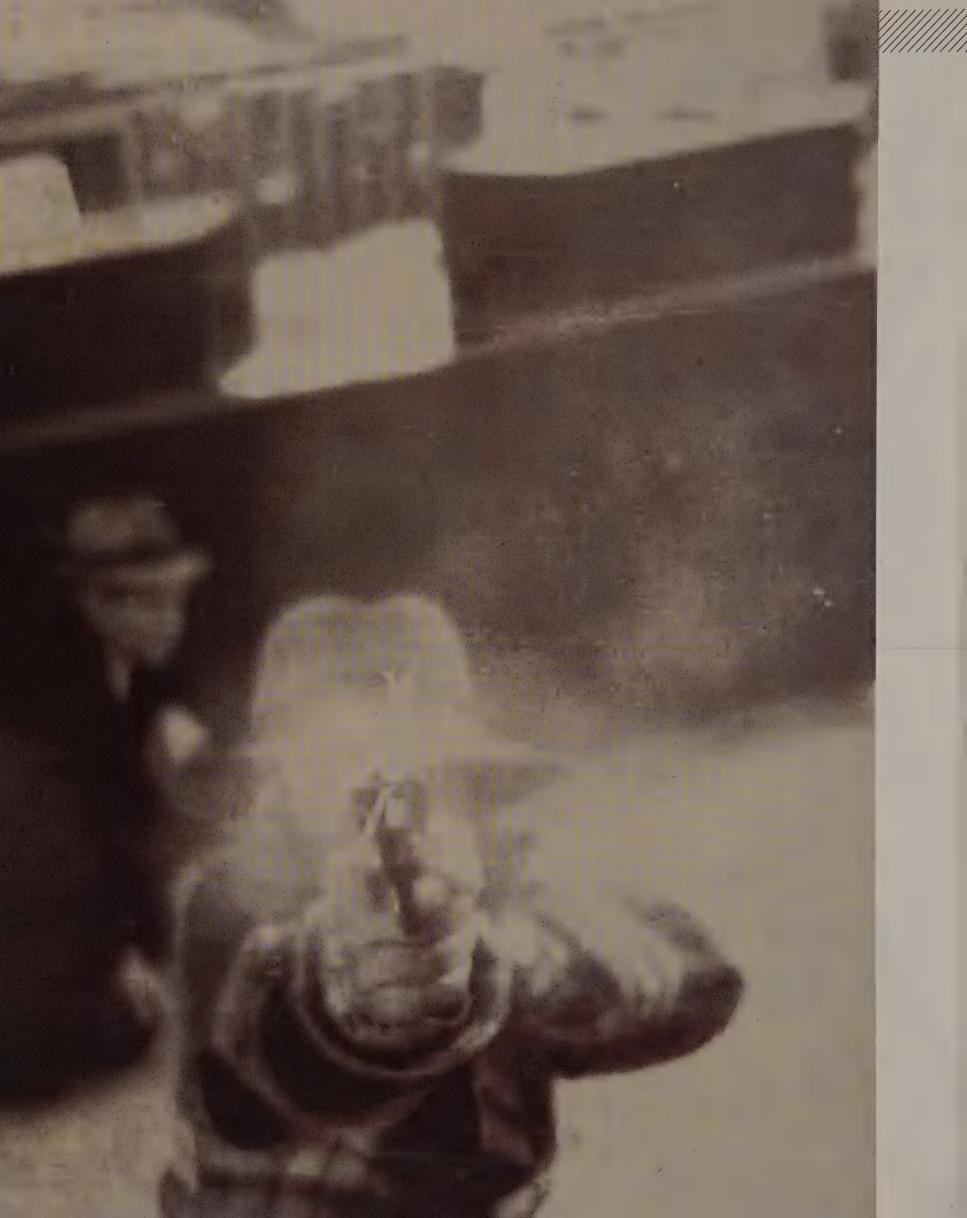
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THE

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ISSUE

The art world can occasionally bring out the best in people, but with a seemingly endless flow of money and notoriously light regulation, it can also be rotten to the core. Herewith, an investigation into some of the more colorful art-related indiscretions in recent years, as well as a look at the aesthetics of crime and punishment.

- 62 ON THE LAM WITH THE FBI'S ART CRIME TEAM
 BY BARBARA POLLACK
- 72 HOW A GROUP OF RUSSIAN SCHOLARS IS FIGHTING AGAINST FAKES
 BY SYLVIA HOCHFIELD
- 80 WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO JASPER JOHNS'S FIRST FLAG PAINTING?
 BY GREG ALLEN
- 90 THE TRIALS OF THE KNOEDLER GALLERY
 BY M. H. MILLER
- 102 ART THAT BREAKS THE LAW, HAPPILY
 BY ANDREW RUSSETH
- 110 THE DELICATE ART OF THE COURTROOM SKETCH
 BY PHOEBE HOBAN

Bank Robber Aiming at Security Camera, Cleveland, Ohio, March 8, 1975, on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition "Crime Stories: Photography and Foul Play," on view until July 31.



ANYTHING CAN BREAK BAD

FBI Special Agent Meridith Savona has learned the difference between the art world and the Malia

BY BARBARA POLIACE

ith a gun in her holster and her mind in art history, FBI Special Agent Meridith Savona has been investigating art crimes for the FBI's New York office major-crimes unit since 2010. She has seen her fair share of fraudsters and thieves, ranging from would-be dealers trying to pawn off fake Jackson Pollocks to rapacious collectors willing to pay top price for stolen artifacts. With all that she has discovered, her view of the art world, characterized by its secretive nature, is considerably less than favorable—simply put, a breeding ground for crime. But, Savona thinks it's changing for the better, due in no small part, she believes, to the FBI's efforts.

Savona is one of two agents based in New York specially trained in the investigation of art crimes, a multimillion-dollar industry rivaling organized crime and arms trafficking. If someone calls the FBI reporting the robbery of a painting or a fraud being committed by a would-be dealer in New York, the case would most likely wind up on her desk or on that of her colleague Christopher McKeogh. The two are members



of the FBI's Art Crime Team, a specialized unit with 16 full-time agents stationed throughout the United States which has recovered more than 2,650 items, valued at more than \$160 million, since its inception in 2004.

"I always wanted to be an FBI agent," said the 50-year-old Savona, who attended Stony Brook University and New England Law, Boston. She came to the FBI in 1996 after working in the Bronx district attorney's office as a prosecutor. During her first 14 years at the bureau, she focused on organized crime, but when an opportunity arrived to work with major theft, specifically art crimes, she jumped on it. "I wanted to do something where I would learn something new, and this turned out to be the most interesting thing I had done in my entire career," she said, admitting that she knew little about art when she took the job. "I could learn about art, about different

mediums and about artists, but when it came to art as a business and an industry, there wasn't a whole lot to guide me." Under the tutelage of the now-retired agent James Wynne, Savona went about learning the ropes, discovering the differences between the art world and the Mafia.

She now spends time at museums and galleries, dragging her husband along when they go on vacation. "I am open to everything because every case is so different," she said. "Every time I get a call on a case, it's a different artist, it's a different medium, and I have to start from scratch to absorb as much as possible." Her cases have ranged from repatriating stolen Chilean tapestries to raiding an Indianapolis cache of pre-Columbian artifacts. She brings in experts when necessary, not only in art but in science as well, especially when it comes to establishing forgeries. Authenticators who may be leery of offering opinions to ordinary citizens for fear of being sued have become increasingly cooperative with her.

Savona's first case involved Glafira Rosales and the Knoedler investigation, which proved to be a real eye-opener. "What I

found was an art world that is this closed, secretive world," she said. She discovered that art transactions were unlike almost any other retail exchange. Related cases against collateral defendants were still pending, so Savona was not at liberty to discuss the investigation in detail, but she believed that the publicity surrounding the Knoedler case may play a role in changing that closemouthed environment. "The art world has changed, and I think you will see in the future that the art world will be less secretive in the sale of paintings; you are going to see no more of these handshake deals; you are going to see a lot more transparency, and that is a big change in the art world from when I first came in."

But the Art Crime Team's focus is not on cutting the art world down to size, or even making the industry more transparent. The unit

was founded in 2004 in response to the raiding of antiquities in Iraq, in particular the looting of rare artifacts from the National Museum in Baghdad in 2003. "Because of the U.S. presence in Iraq at the time, it was clear that somebody would have to investigate," said Bonnie Magness-Gardiner, manager of the Art Crime Team. "It was also clear that the U.S. government didn't have a team organized, in place, or with the expertise required to do that kind of investigation," she said. When the Art Crime Team was established a year later, it began with just eight parttime agents.

Retired Special Agent Robert Wittman was a key player in this development. The son of an Asian antiquities dealer, Wittman began investigating art-related crimes as an agent stationed in Philadelphia in the 1980s. In his 20 years with the bureau, he worked a wide variety of cases, often going undercover to set up

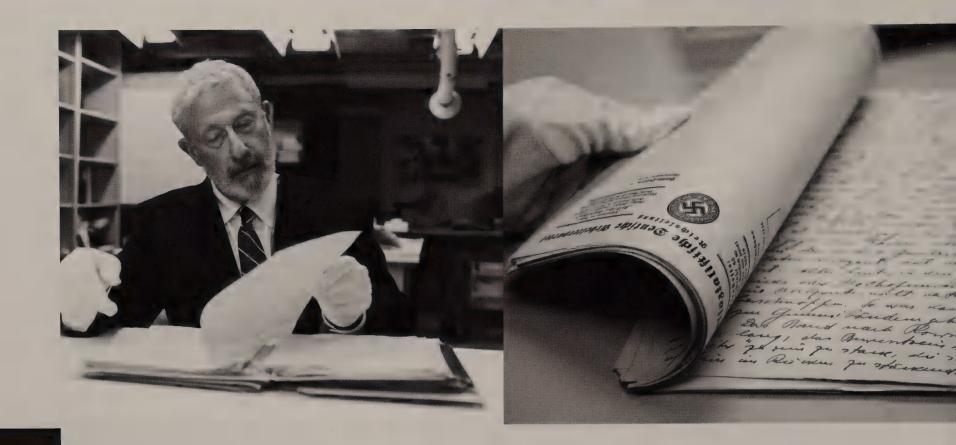
"deals" to reclaim stolen artworks. He worked frequently on cases that brought him to Europe, where he noted that Italy, France, Great Britain, and Spain all had special units devoted to art thefts and forgeries, whereas the United States, which controls "40 percent of the art market," according to Wittman, has rarely been provided a budget to pursue such cases.

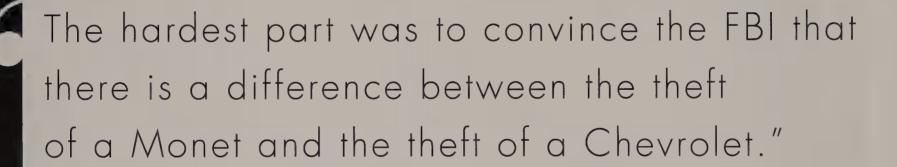
"Ultimately, art theft is a property crime," said Wittman, author of *Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures* and the just-released book *The Devil's Diary* about the return of a missing Nazi diary to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The hardest part of this job was to convince the FBI that there is a difference between the theft of a Monet and the theft of a Chevrolet." Along with establishing the Art Crime Team, the FBI also instituted the National Stolen Art File, an electronic index of items valued at over \$2,000, which the public can use to report their suspicions and check on the validity of questionable artworks coming to the market.

According to Wittman, a background in criminal investigation work is essential to being a good art-crime detective. "You need to know the elements of the crime and the statutes that pertain, but then it takes an interest in art," he said. "You don't have to be a connoisseur or a specialist, but you have to know the difference between a print versus a painting versus a giclée." But by far the hardest thing to learn is the business of art, explained the retired agent, who often modeled his undercover performances on his father's talents at deal making and who often found himself making "deals" on yachts, in hotel rooms, and even in parking lots.

PREVIOUS SPREAD Meridith Savona photographed at FBI headquarters in New York City on February 26, 2016. Opposite A Chilean Tapestry. *The Ambassadors of Rome Offering the Throne to Numa Pompilio*, was recovered by the FBI Art Crime Team in 2015. Below Looted treasures stacked high in a church in Elligen, Bavaria.

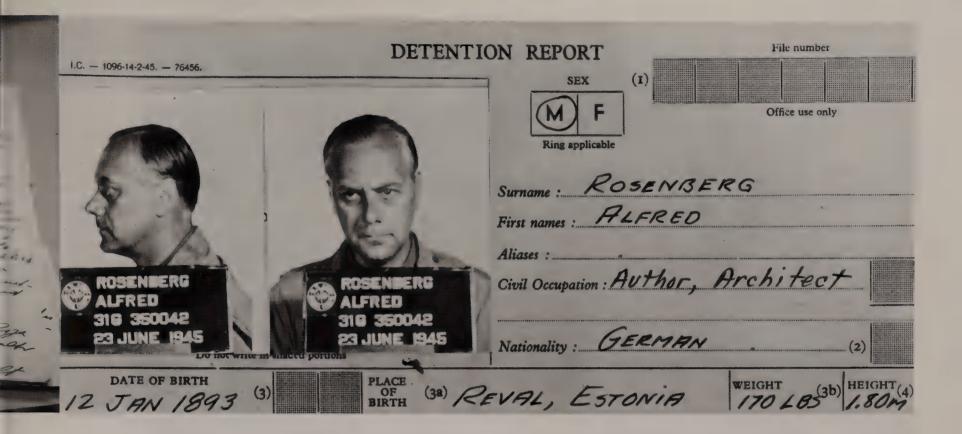






Perhaps, Wittman recalled, his most thrilling case involved trying to track down one of the Rembrandts and the Vermeer that went missing from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990. In that instance, he pretended to be an unscrupulous art dealer named Bob Clay who had flown down to Miami to meet with Frenchman Bernard Ternus. Ternus boasted of having access to numerous stolen works of art, including two Picassos taken from Diana Picasso's apartment in Paris and a cache of paintings stolen at gunpoint from the Museum of Fine Arts in Nice.

"He said he had a Rembrandt and a Vermeer for sale, and it didn't take a whole leap of logic to figure out that there's only one Vermeer missing from the 36 in the world, and to know it had to have come from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum," said Wittman. Over the course of the investigation, he met with criminals in Barcelona and coordinated with the French police



in Paris and Nice from June 2006 until the final arrests in June 2008. The scariest moment came in 2007, when the crooks suspected that Wittman was an informant after the police had recovered the missing Picassos. "That particular case was fairly dangerous because the individuals involved were all doing armed robberies, and when they thought I was an informant, they threatened my life," he recalled, describing the hair-raising meeting that took place at the Diplomat Hotel in Miami. "I had to stare them down and talk my way out of it," he said, noting that this was one of the rare occasions when he came armed with two guns, one in each pocket.

"We recovered about \$75 million of stolen art, but we couldn't get the Vermeer or the Rembrandt," said Wittman. "I probably got pretty close to finding them, and I thought if we could have kept going, we would have had a good shot at possibly identifying where they were, because those art thieves didn't lie about the Picassos, so I thought they weren't lying about the rest of the paintings." Unfortunately, once the French police had arrested the gang for the crimes committed in France, they were uninterested in pursuing the investigation further. In the end, Ternus was sentenced to five years in the United States for transporting stolen goods, and was then deported back to France where he is serving another eight-year sentence for the robberies themselves.

opposite Henry Mayer, senior adviser on archives at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, examines the Rosenberg diary, which spans ten years and 500 pages. Above Rosenberg's detention report from when he was arrested on May 18, 1945, by British forces.

ittman's last case, which began when he was at the FBI but continued past his retirement to 2013, was the recovery of a diary written by Third Reich mastermind Alfred Rosenberg. Wittman was contacted in 2001 by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which was supposed to have received the text along with a cache of papers from the estate of Nuremberg prosecutor Robert Kempner. The diary turned up in the possession of a man in Lewisburg, New York, who had gotten it from one of the prosecutor's former girlfriends and was holding onto it to turn a profit. "This is my most satisfying case," said Wittman, who, in the course of his career, had recovered one of the original copies of the Bill of Rights, an original edition of Darwin's On the Origin of Species, and an original edition of Copernicus's On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres. "All those were interesting, but we knew what the books contained. The diary was different because no one knew what was in there. It had never been translated or transcribed." The recovered text contains invaluable information regarding meetings with Hitler about the "final solution" for the Jews as well as the invasion of Russia. This case is the subject of The Devil's Diary.

Even though Savona is not certified to go undercover and has not had the same high-profile experiences as Wittman, she has witnessed plenty of excitement of her own. When asked if this line of work is ever dangerous, she replied, "Sure, because anything can break bad." Speaking of carrying a gun in her holster, she explained, "On the surface, I am confronting a person who has just committed a fraud, but I don't know how far they are willing to go



to save those millions of dollars they are making. I am the person is who is trying to stop them from making millions of dollars or is going to prevent them from leaving the country. You never know how far someone like that is willing to go."

The FBI Art Crime Team maintains a ten-most-wanted list of missing works, currently topped by the cache of 13 paintings stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990, including four works by Rembrandt and a Vermeer. A reward of \$5 million has not led to any arrests or information on the whereabouts of the stolen items. Other works on the list include Caravaggio's Nativity with Saint Francis and Saint Lawrence, stolen in 1969 from Palermo, Italy, and valued at \$20 million, and van Gogh's View of the Sea at Scheveningen and Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen, together valued at \$30 million, stolen from the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam in 2003. Speaking of the Gardner Museum theft, Wittman remained optimistic. "If those paintings are still in existence, they will be recovered, because the bright spot about art is that it outlasts us, so at some point, they are going to come back on the market," he said.

"The problem with a theft case is finding the object," explained Savona. "Sometimes, with museums, a theft is not noticed for a period of time until later, when they are doing an inventory." But noting that the latest museum theft case in the United States is over 20 years old, she insisted that the situation is getting far easier for FBI agents and more difficult for thieves, as surveillance and security considerations now make robberies "pretty tough."

Fraud and forgeries are on the rise, however, especially as the Internet has made advertising with false claims and fine print that much easier. In 2015 Savona worked the case of East Hampton "dealer" John Re, who was offering a cache of alleged Jackson Pollocks for sale, claiming that they had been discovered in the basement of art restorer George Schulte. Eventually Schulte's family reported the sales to the FBI out of concern for his reputation. Re pled guilty and was sentenced to five years. "I think the biggest mistake that people make in such cases is that they want to believe they are seeing something that no one else has seen," said Savona. "If it sounds too good to be true, chances are it's not true."

epatriation of stolen artifacts is also a priority of the FBI Art Crime Team. Cases often involve relationships with Interpol and foreign governments. Today Syria has been added as a key source of looted antiquities, along with Iraq. But sometimes Special Agent Savona is called in to work on cases closer to home.

In 2014 the FBI Art Crime Team deployed special agents, including Savona, to conduct a raid on an Indianapolis home, removing thousands of cultural artifacts, including Native American items. They had been taken by a 91-year-old man, Don Miller, over the course of several decades. "We're collecting and analyzing with the goal of repatriation," FBI Special Agent Drew Northern said at the time of the confiscation. Larry Zimmerman,



a professor of anthropology and museum studies at Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis, described his reaction as "frankly overwhelmed. I have never seen a collection like this in my life except in some of the largest museums." In addition to American Indian objects, the collection includes items from China, Russia, Peru, Haiti, Australia, and New Guinea, he said. The FBI admits that the task of cataloguing and repatriating the artifacts will take years of work.

On a typical day, Savona handles 12 to 15 cases. She acknowledged that art crime is so prevalent that the FBI could have 20 agents in the New York office working on it full time. Savona spends most of her time interviewing suspects and witnesses, sometimes in tandem with a partner. "It comes down to getting people to talk to you when it is really not in their best interest to speak up," she said. "Somehow, some way, you get them to open up. The best part of the job for me is having a partner to work with and getting a back-and-forth going until you get someone to open up. That's really what this is all about, and it's how you make your cases."

opposite Meridith Savona photographed at FBI headquarters. Above Robert Wittman a.k.a. "Bob Clay" with Geronimo's war bonnet, valued at \$1.2 million and recovered in an undercover operation in Philadelphia.



PHARAOH AKHENATEN ORDERS THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL AMUN ARTIFACTS

here are two things for which Pharaoh Akhenaten, née Amenhotep IV, is best known almost 3,500 years after his short, tumultuous reign: being the husband of Nefertiti, whose famous bust has earned her the title of most beautiful woman who ever lived; and instituting a heretical monotheistic religion that brought about the first instance of iconoclasm in recorded history. Next to Osiris, the god of the underworld, Amun-Ra was the most invoked and recorded of the Ancient Egyptian gods, beginning with the dynasty of Ahmose I in the mid-16th century B.C. This is the religious climate that Amenhotep IV (whose name meant "Amun is content") entered when he assumed the throne of Egypt, circa 1353 B.C. Along with members of the nobility, priests were second in command, and Amenhotep was wary of their power.

In the third year of his reign, he ordered the construction of a gigantic temple just east of the Great Temple of Amun in Karnak to honor the new god of his choice: Aten, god of the sun. In the fifth year, he settled on a representative image of a solar disk and changed his name to Akhenaten, meaning "agreeable to the sun disk." To fortify his domain, he abandoned the traditional Egyptian capital at Thebes and established a new city 200 miles away, along the Nile River but still surrounded by desert. He called this city, which is located at the site of present-day Tell el-Amarna, Akhetaten ("horizon of the Aten").

This was all highly unusual. Ancient Egyptians traditionally communed with the divine through individual worship, through priests, and through their pharaoh. And while pharaohs were considered to be representations of gods in human form, no pharaoh had ever declared himself to be the people's sole channel of divine communication, as Akhenaten had. Additionally, Ancient Egyptians, used to an entire pantheon, found their lone new god to be wholly inscrutable. Aten was sorely lacking an origin story, and was depicted by an inanimate object—a sun disk—rather than the usual, more sympathetic amalgams of human and animal forms.

Not unlike the iconoclasms that occurred millennia later with the rise of Protestantism, Akhenaten's efforts to convert Egypt inevitably led to the destruction of significant works of ancient art and architecture. He ordered that the word "gods" be made singular throughout the kingdom, eradicated the name Amun entirely, and commanded artists to replace depictions of Osiris with images of Aten. (Though Akhenaten is credited with instituting history's first example of monotheism, it would be more accurate to call his worship of Aten a form of monolatry, which involves the worship of one god above all others.) The few temples of Amun that he did not destroy remained shuttered until after his death. Perhaps worst of all, Akhenaten decreed that correct worship of Aten involved long, uninterrupted periods of sunbathing. As such, Egyptians roasted inside the new, roofless structures he erected to replace the old.

From an art-historical standpoint, one positive outcome of Akhenaten's reign was the emergence of the Amarna style, an artistic and architectural style popular during and just after his 16-year tenure as pharaoh. Supposedly championed by Akhenaten himself—he was known to have a keen interest in art, and he had an obvious need for some fresh propaganda—this new style flouted traditional constraints of portraiture. Instead of stolid, symmetrical, and front-facing forms, the royal family was depicted in surprisingly modern-looking, naturalistic profile, with spindly limbs, distended stomachs, large hips, extremely slender necks, slanted eyes, egg-shaped heads, and prognathous jaws, captured in medias res of everyday activities.

After Akhenaten's death, circa 1334 B.C., the kingdom reverted back to its polytheistic roots. Temples that narrowly avoided demolition once again hosted worshippers of Amun. As a final act of tragic irony, priests of Amun later convinced Akhenaten's young son—the pharaoh popularly remembered as King Tut—to change his name from Tutankhaten, meaning "the living image of Aten," to Tutankhamun, which translates to "the living image of Amun."

-Hannah Ghorashi

ABOVE A statue of Pharaoh Akhenaten from his Aten Temple at Karnak, now at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

CARAVAGGIO MURDERS RANUCCIO TOMASSONI AND FLEES TO NAPLES



1606

woman yanks a man's head back by his hair and lets blood spurt out from a gash in his throat. This is not an image from Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill, but rather the subject matter for Caravaggio's painting Judith Beheading Holofernes (1598–99), which, in more ways than one, typifies the Italian Baroque painter's career. It highlights Caravaggio's love of dramatic, sleazy subject matter; it also shows just how attached to violence he was. In 1606, nearly seven years after Caravaggio finished that painting, the Papal State put out a bando capitale, or a death warrant of sorts, for the artist after he killed Ranuccio Tomassoni, a Roman pimp.

The way it went down sounds like something out of a Baroque painting: Caravaggio stabbed Tomassoni in the femoral artery after accidentally missing his testicles, causing Tomassoni to bleed out. This was hardly the first time an encounter with Caravaggio had ended in violence. A few years before, he had stalked a young painter who had insulted him, later stabbing the painter to make a point. (The wounds were not fatal.) In a separate incident, a waiter debated with Caravaggio, so he smashed a plate into the waiter's mouth. There was no reason not to suspect that, in due time, Caravaggio would kill someone.

The circumstances surrounding Tomassoni's death remain murky. Until recently, because Tomassoni was stabbed near a tennis court, urban legend had it that Caravaggio killed him during a fight over the results of a game. But, in a 2002 BBC documentary titled *Who Killed Caravaggio?* art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon used Vatican and Roman State documents to prove that the death had been brought on by a spat over something else entirely—a romantic interest.

Four years before finishing Judith Beheading Holfernes, Caravaggio was commissioned by a nobleman to paint Portrait of a Courtesan (1597), in which a woman dressed in 16th-century clothing holds an orange blossom to her breast. (The painting has since been destroyed.) The model for the portrait was Fillide

Melandroni, a prostitute who reported to Tomassoni, and who is rumored to have been, at one point, in a relationship with him. Caravaggio was also reportedly enamored of her, which would explain why, in the portrait, she's painted as the Roman goddess Flora. "Judging by the way he painted her, Caravaggio had clearly succumbed to her sexual charms," Graham-Dixon told the *Telegraph* shortly before his documentary aired.

This may have been written out of history because it doesn't fit with the narrative that Caravaggio was homosexual—his paintings often feature half-naked muscular men, and Derek Jarman's 1986 film *Caravaggio* even uses the painter's sexuality to explore identity politics. And yet, "he had an eye for male beauty, but he probably swung both ways," Graham-Dixon said in the *Telegraph* interview. But why did Caravaggio kill Tomassoni and commit so many other acts of violence? In his 1998 book *M: The Man Who Became Caravaggio*, which has since been re-published in several other editions, Peter Robb suggests that the painter wanted "to be his own man, create his own life and project his own vision of the world"—and this was exactly what Caravaggio did after fleeing the scene of the crime.

The same year he killed Tomassoni, Caravaggio left for Naples, where he successfully found patrons and continued to paint. No more than nine months later, however, he relocated again, this time to Malta, where he still received commissions. In the last years of his life, Caravaggio moved back and forth between Naples and Sicily, where he died, through relatively less violent means than his victim. The cause of death was lead poisoning, from the artist's own paints.

-Alex Greenberger

ABOVE Caravaggio's Judith Beheading Holofernes, 1598-99.



A VA VIII-GARDE FAIR TAIRS

A new organization, the Russian Avant-Garde Research Project, seeks to untangle facts, fakes, and fictions

candals have never been in short supply in the world of Russian avant-garde art, but the last few years have seen a bumper crop, with the controversial arrest of a respected Russian curator on fraud charges and, more recently, the attempt by the Russian Ministry of Culture to ban a book full of reproductions of allegedly fake paintings by Russia's most famous woman artist, Natalia Goncharova.

These were noteworthy events even in this sometimes murky world. Specialists know that most of the Russian avant-garde works available on the market are fakes—ten times as many fakes as genuine works, said James Butterwick, who has been dealing in Russian avant-garde art in London for 20 years, and others in the field backed him up.

These days the major auction houses are extremely cautious and reject any work whose incomplete provenance arouses doubts, but dubious works continue to proliferate in minor auction houses and art galleries all over Europe. Russian and Western experts who certify artworks regularly accuse one another of corruption or negligence.

Now a new organization, the London-based Russian Avant-Garde Research Project (RARP), is entering the field with an ambitious goal. "We want to introduce new standards of scholarship that will help solve the main problems in the field of Russian



We want to introduce new standards of scholarship that will help solve the main problems in the field of Russian art history."

art history," said Konstantin Akinsha, one of RARP's founders and a member of its board.

RARP will not authenticate artworks or issue certificates. It will have two main directions, Akinsha said. "One is the research of provenance 'fairy tales' circulating in the art market," largely through the study of museum archives, including those of defunct museums.

The first research project, to be undertaken in cooperation with the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, will be the complete digitization of the Goncharova archive, which is housed in the museum: a trove of more than 2,000 documents, including diaries, notebooks, and letters. RARP will supply the equipment for the materials to be put online and annotated by curator Evgeniya Illukhina. "Publication of this material will help clear up many Goncharova provenances," Akinsha said.

PREVIOUS SPREAD Alexandra Exter, A costume design for Romeo and Juliet: Juliet, 1920–21. This page Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. Opposite Natalia Goncharova, Espagnole, 1916, which sold for a record \$10.2 million at Christie's in 2010. Genuine high-quality works like these are few.



PREVIOUS SPREAD AND OPPOSITE: COURTESY CHRISTIE'S; THIS PAGE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



RARP will also support research projects focused on such crucial sources of information as the inventories of the museums of avantgarde art that flourished in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. The Museum of Painterly Culture was established in Moscow in 1922 (seven years before the founding of the Museum of Modern Art), while a network of 30 provincial museums disseminated visual culture to the masses. Having precise inventories for these institutions, and for exhibitions that were sent to the West, would unmask many fanciful provenances.

"Provenance, history is all-important in this field," Butterwick emphasized. "I have seen fake certificates that said the pictures came from the Museum of Painterly Culture. Having an inventory could put a stop to that."

RARP is supported by donors from Russia and the West, of whom the best known is the Russian banker Petr Aven, a well-known collector of Russian modernism and a longtime scourge of abuses in the field. Members of its governing board are the American Kandinsky scholar Vivian Endicott Barnett, Natalia Murray of the Courtauld Institute, Mark Pollard, Edward Hall Professor of Archaeological Science at Oxford University, and Akinsha, an independent art historian and curator who has been largely responsible for publicizing the problem of Russian avant-garde fakes in articles for *ARTnews* over the last 30 years.

RARP's second major direction, Akinsha said, will be to study the materials and techniques of Russian avant-garde artists in depth and detail, taking advantage of all the newest methods and technologies. "To date, this study has been largely piecemeal and often focused on authenticity questions rather than on establishing a baseline of original practice," Akinsha said. RARP plans to undertake a survey of Russian avant-garde paintings in major museum collections in order to generate a database of reliable information from which larger technical and art-historical issues can be explored. "And creating a bank of samples and studying the materials and techniques of the major artists will help us to achieve a new level of technical analysis of Russian art," Akinsha explained.

Aside from the Tretyakov, RARP is negotiating with three other major museums to examine the works in their collections. Akinsha said that a major stimulus to the formation of RARP was the Goncharova scandal of 2011: the publication in the West of two fat volumes filled with reproductions of allegedly fake works by the artist.

oncharova (1881–1962) is one of the world's most expensive women artists; her 1916 painting *Espagnole* sold for a record \$10.2 million at Christie's London in 2010. Prices have risen steeply, but genuine high-quality works like this one are few, which has led to the proliferation of forgeries. Goncharova and another Russian woman, Alexandra Exter, are among the world's most frequently forged women artists.

The two books—Anthony Parton's *The Art and Design of Natalia Goncharova*, and Denise Bazetoux's *Natalia Goncharova: son oeuvre entre tradition et modernité*—were blasted by the Tretyakov curators, who appeared at a press conference in Moscow hosted





TOP London dealer James Butterwick. BOTTOM Konstantin Akinsha, one of RARP's founders and a member of the board. Opposite Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux's books that were blasted by Tretyakov curators.

PPOSITE TOP: COURTESY OF JAMES BUTTERWICK; BOTTOM: COURTESY KONSTANTIN AKINSHA

"Provenance, history is all-important in this field...I have seen fake certificates that said the pictures came from the Museum of Painterly Culture.

Having an inventory could put a stop to that."





by RIA Novosti, the government news agency, to give their views maximum exposure. In Parton's book, the curators said, at least 150 of the 600 works illustrated were fakes. The Bazetoux volume was even worse. Of the approximately 1,500 works illustrated, the curators said, about 60 to 70 percent were fake.

In a letter to the Ministry of Culture, the curators charged that a "grand scale operation...criminal in its essence" and with "openly commercial aims" was destroying "efforts to popularize Russian art in the West and the rapprochement of our cultures." They asserted their "moral right" to ask the ministry to deal with the problem "on a state level."

The ministry obliged and filed a claim in the Arbitration Court, the country's supreme commercial tribunal, asking that the sale of Parton's book be prohibited in Russia. Parton did not respond to a request for comment.

The court also demanded that the publisher stop printing the book and recall all existing copies. Fifty years after her death, it seems, Goncharova can still provoke as much outrage as she did in 1910, when she painted her face and paraded topless through the streets of Moscow.

It is noteworthy that, for once, the move had nothing to do with politics or religion or even sex. The book's distribution, the ministry claimed, would damage the cultural heritage of Russia, and the basis for the claim was those many illustrations of allegedly fake paintings.

The Arbitration Court's decision is expected in May, but some Russian book distributors have already reached a settlement with the ministry. In any case, it is unlikely that the Russian tribunal's ruling will have more than moral force in the West.

"Despite all the scandals rocking the market," Akinsha said, "highly questionable works by Malevich, El Lissitzky, and other artists of the Russian avant-garde are appearing on museum walls with disturbing frequency and are reproduced in museum catalogues and art books. They pollute the history of Russian art, and they are toxic not only for the art trade, but also for future scholarship."

Is it possible to clean the Augean stables of the Russian avant-garde? "It will be very difficult," Akinsha said, "but it's possible. I hope RARP will be the first step."





VINCENZO PERUGGIA STEALS THE MONA LISA

he 1911 theft of the Mona Lisa seems to be a magnet for myths. The most popular range from claiming the heist as the source of the painting's frame to saying the robbery was part of a larger ruse orchestrated by mastermind Eduardo de Valfierno, who intended to have the painting copied by French forger Yves Chaudron (a hypothesis that first appeared in a 1932 issue of the Saturday Evening Post, but is now largely rejected). The real story is far less cinematic, but perhaps more lyrical, than lore suggests. An Italian nationalist and former employee at the Louvre, Vincenzo Peruggia, lifted the painting for so-called patriotic reasons on a quiet Monday, when the museum was closed.

Peruggia (dressed in his old Louvre uniform) entered the museum through the backdoor, took the Mona Lisa off the wall, retreated to a nearby service stairwell, and stripped the painting of its frame and glass case (which he himself had installed). After an incident with the locked escape door, remedied by an in-house plumber dressed in the same museum-mandated smock, Peruggia made his way back to his Paris apartment via taxi—the painting under his arm, wrapped in an overcoat. No one registered the Mona Lisa's absence until the following Tuesday, when Louis Béroud, a Sunday painter, visited the museum to sketch the work. Entering the Salon Carré and noticing the four, bare iron hooks on which the piece was previously hung, Béroud asked a guard when the painting would be returned. (During this period, the Louvre's photographers took many works off the walls for archival purposes, without written documentation.) The guard went off to investigate, but came back stupefied. The Mona Lisa was missing.

The Louvre closed for a week. Newspapers were abuzz. Commenting to the New York Times, the assistant curator at the museum, Monsieur Bénédite, said: "Why the theft was committed is a mystery to me, as I consider the picture valueless in the hands of a private individual." Peruggia, still in Paris, was keeping

the painting on his kitchen table. A year later, the museum hung a Raphael in the Mona Lisa's place. On November 29, 1912, Alfredo Geri, a Florentine art dealer, received a letter from a certain "Leonardo" in Paris, according to historian Patricia Daniels. The letter read: "The stolen work of Leonardo da Vinci is in my possession. It seems to belong to Italy because its painter is Italian." After a brief exchange, it was decided that Peruggia would bring the work in. Eleven days later, he walked into Geri's shop, empty-handed but with a proposition: Italy could have the work back for 500,000 lire, to cover what "Leonardo" termed "expenses."

Skeptical, Geri brought the director of the Uffizi Gallery, Giovanni Poggi, with him to Peruggia's hotel room (just blocks away from the dealer's shop) to authenticate the work. Seeing the signature on the back, the two took the piece to Poggi's gallery. Within the hour, the police had arrived at Peruggia's. Unfortunately for Peruggia, who had prior convictions for small crimes in Paris, he had left a fingerprint on the wall of the Louvre next to the piece. His criminal profile matched his print, and the thief was detained until his trial, scheduled for June 4, 1914, in Florence. During the trial, Peruggia claimed the work had been stolen by Napoleon during the Napoleonic Wars. This was false. In fact, Leonardo had given the piece to King Francis I some 250 years prior. Because of the political ethos of the time (Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated during the legal proceedings), the court was relatively sympathetic to Peruggia, sentencing him to one year and 15 days in prison. Seven months into this term, he was released, lauded by Italy as a national hero.

-Ella Coon

ABOVE Vincenzo Peruggia's mug shot from 1909.

In 1939 Manfred von Killinger, the minister-president of Saxony, wrote, "Is the swine still alive, then?" The swine in question was the German painter Otto Dix, who had recently been arrested in connection with a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Unfortunately for von Killinger, Dix, who was innocent of such conspiring, was very much alive. Although no other artists have ever been accused of trying to kill Hitler, many more were persecuted for what the Nazis believed were crimes against art. With the rise of the Nazis came a backlash against modernism, which, with its graphic sexual imagery and inspirations from African art, was believed to have gone against German values. A crisis ensued for artists like Dix. How could German modernists continue to create art when their country was censoring their work?

Even before the Nazis came to power, Dix was causing controversy. In 1924 he produced a series of antiwar etchings titled "Der Krieg" (The War), made in response to the artist's experience fighting in World War I. The Neue Sachlichkeit painter had also been working on portraits critical of the bourgeoisie and its twisted behaviors, often distorting his subjects until they looked more like monsters than middle-class Germans. Unabashedly sexual and sometimes controversial, Dix's paintings even landed him in court in 1923, when he was brought up on obscenity charges for an image of a half-nude woman looking into a mirror and seeing an older, wretched version of herself. But Dix achieved popularity, both in Germany and abroad, and by 1933 he was teaching at the Dresden Academy of Arts. But shortly thereafter, under a new provision that allowed the Nazis to intervene in arts institutions, Dix lost his job.

In 1937 the Nazis put on an exhibition called "Entartete Kunst," or "Degenerate Art." Held in Munich in July, the show highlighted art that, according to a guidebook, featured "barbarism of representation...the progressive collapse of sensitivity to form and color, the conscious regard for the basics of technique... and the total stupidity of the choice of subject matter." Work by Dadaists, German Expressionists, Surrealists, and others was targeted—Dix's art was seen as "painted sabotage of national defense." An estimated 36,000 people saw the show by late August; it was later extended to meet popular demand.

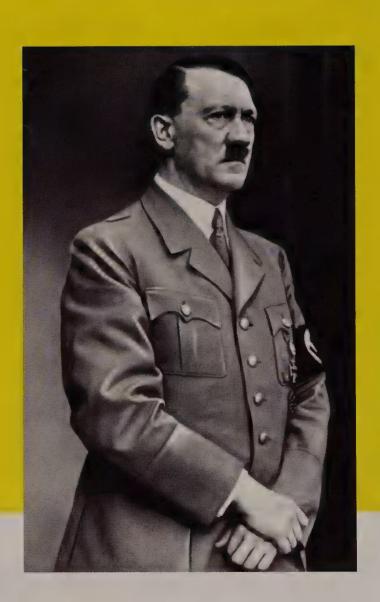
By this time, Dix had ceased painting portraits in favor of landscapes and allegories, which he hoped would keep him out of trouble. But he was aware that these, too, would be scandalous. They were still politically inflamed. One even features Hitler as a personified form of Envy. It was probably paintings such as these that led to Dix's arrest. The Nazis could find nothing incriminating, and when he was released, Dix went to the countryside and continued to paint landscapes. Even there, however, he couldn't avoid what was happening in his country—in 1945 he was taken as a prisoner to Colmar, where he remained until the end of World War II. In 1991, three decades after Dix died, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art revisited the censorship of Dix and other German artists' work with a show called "Degenerate Art." The show's curator, Stephanie Barron, highlighted how familiar this was at a time when the NEA was defunding controversial art. "Perhaps after a serious look at events that unfolded over half a century ago in Germany," Barron wrote in the LACMA catalogue, we may apply what we learn to our own predicament, in which for the first time in the postwar era the arts and freedom of artistic expression in America are facing a serious challenge."

-A.G.

RIGHT: Adolf Hitler in 1937

1939

OTTO DIX IS ACCUSED OF PLOTTING TO KILL HITLER







Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and the case of the missing flag

BY GREG ALLEN

obert Rauschenberg kept only one major example of his earliest, most influential body of work, the Combine paintings he made between 1954 and 1961. Short Circuit (1955) is similar to other works from the period; it incorporates sculptural elements with both painting and drawing and combines abstraction with images and objects plucked from the young artist's world. But it was not included in his breakout exhibition, in 1958 at Leo Castelli Gallery. And though it was published in a couple of catalogues, Rauschenberg didn't loan it to his 1976 or his 1998 retrospective, and he declined its inclusion in curator Paul Schimmel's exhaustive Combines exhibition of 2005. Its appearance at Gagosian Gallery in 2010, two years after the artist's death, was the first time the work had been seen in public in over 40 years. (It was wisely acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago.) Despite its low public profile, this Combine has had an extraordinary history and is a pivotal work of postwar American art. But Short Circuit's significance is based not solely on what is included in it, but also on what is missing.

Short Circuit is made of classic Combine ingredients: thick brushstrokes, a lace curtain, a scrap of polka-dotted fabric, postcard images of a Renaissance painting and Abraham Lincoln, a word scramble, a program from an early John Cage concert, and a Judy Garland autograph, all affixed with paint to a chassis made of scrap wood and cupboard doors. Behind those doors Rauschenberg hid two smaller paintings, by two then-unknown artists: one was a landscape by his ex-wife, Susan Weil, and the other was a U.S. flag by his then-partner Jasper Johns.

Johns made over 40 paintings of the American flag beginning in the mid-'50s, none of which was shown publicly until his first solo exhibition, also at Castelli, in 1958. Do the math. *Short Circuit*

LEFT Robert Rauschenberg at his retrospective exhibition at the National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C., 1976.



was created for an exhibition in early 1955, which makes the flag painting in it not just the first flag painting Johns showed, but likely the first flag painting he made. The flag embedded in this Combine is one of the most important paintings in contemporary art history, and also one of the most valuable. It upends the commonly understood story of how Johns and Rauschenberg worked together and influenced each other, and of how Johns conceived his most significant work.

Or it would, if it were still there. Johns's flag was stolen out of *Short Circuit* in 1965 and has never been recovered. Rauschenberg eventually replaced it with another painting, titled *Johns Flag*, a copy by his close friend and collaborator Elaine Sturtevant. This is the flag seen first at Gagosian, and then in Chicago, that made me wonder what happened to the works—both the Combine and the original flag within. Conflicting accounts of the disappearance of the Johns flag scattered in the footnotes of art-history texts and exhibition catalogues over the years do not help. People (or dealers, curators, and critics, anyway) don't know what happened to a major work by two major artists of the day, and they seem not to care, content to pass along inaccuracies or offhand dismissals. Where is the original flag that would rewrite art history or bring an easy \$100 million at auction (or both), and why isn't there an all-out, Gardner Museum Vermeer—style hunt for it?



"Where is the original flag that would rewrite art history or bring an easy \$100 million at auction (or both), and why isn't there an all-out, Gardner Museum Vermeer–style hunt for it?"

wanted to address, if not answer, these apparently ignored questions, and so I set out to find the *Short Circuit* flag. Beginning in 2010, I searched archives and emailed and interviewed every person I could find who might have firsthand knowledge of the Combine, its creation, its history, and the circumstances of the flag's disappearance. And what I found affected the way I view Johns and Rauschenberg's work, their relationship, and their place in history.

Rauschenberg's Combines are very much products of his life and surroundings at the time of their making. The early ones especially, and *Short Circuit* most definitely, are loaded with personal, autobiographical, and even private esoteric references, which critic Yve-Alain Bois derided as "semantic traps," good for little more than "keeping art historians busy for generations to come." And here we are.

First, a little background. Rauschenberg married Susan Weil in 1950, over the objections of her father, who did not think Rauschenberg was the marrying type. The couple lived in a studio

apartment on New York City's Upper West Side, where they made art, cyanotypes on blueprint paper, and a baby—Christopher, born in the summer of 1951, when Rauschenberg was at Black Mountain College. Rauschenberg spent much of 1952 in North Carolina, then, in the fall, took off to Italy with fellow Black Mountaineer Cy Twombly, while Weil stayed stateside to file for divorce. Twombly and Rauschenberg came back to New York in 1953. The painter Jack Tworkov had chosen one of Rauschenberg's black paintings for inclusion in the New York Artists Annual (better known as the Stable Annual) at Eleanor Ward's Stable Gallery. Rauschenberg and Twombly subsequently showed at Stable together, and Rauschenberg worked at the gallery as a maintenance man. Eventually, he met and took up with Jasper Johns, another aspiring artist.

In 1954 Johns helped Rauschenberg make a collaged, freestanding, screenlike prop for a Merce Cunningham performance. Called *Minutiae*, it is one of the first Combines, though it spent most of its early life strapped to the roof of John Cage's Volkswagen tour bus and wasn't shown in a gallery until 1976. Rauschenberg showed red paintings at Charles Egan Gallery, many of which contained fabric, images, and brushstrokes similar to those of *Short Circuit*. Tworkov once again chose a Rauschenberg painting for the second Stable Annual. Meanwhile, Johns destroyed most of the work he'd made up to and during 1954.

When the third Stable Annual rolled around, in April 1955,

the gallery invited Rauschenberg to exhibit his work again. He wanted to invite other artists to collaborate on his piece, but the gallery wouldn't allow this. And so Rauschenberg conceived of the work that came to be known as Short Circuit as a way to smuggle his curated picks into the Annual. He wrote letters to Weil and Black Mountain buddies Ray Johnson and Stan VanDerBeek, inviting them to make works for inclusion in his piece. In an email to me, Weil called Rauschenberg's gesture sweet and generous. (Photocopies of Rauschenberg's invitations to other artists to contribute to Short Circuit were shown alongside the work in a Finch College Museum group show in 1967, but these letters have not turned up since.) Short Circuit contained two small doors that, when opened, revealed the work of the two artists who agreed to participate: Johns and Weil. (A more pointed story was told by Castelli in a 1973 interview with Smithsonian archivist Paul Cummings: Rauschenberg proposed Johns and Weil for the show, but the vetting committee of artists from the previous Annual rejected them.)

Rauschenberg was included on the Stable Gallery artist list; Johns and Weil were not. There is no works list, recorded account, or installation image showing *Short Circuit* in the show, but the story goes that the Combine doors, which have arrows and

OPPOSITE Short Circuit, 1955, displayed with closed doors. Below Short Circuit, with open doors, featuring a Susan Weil painting and Elaine Sturtevant's reproduction of a Jasper Johns flag.





instructions to open them, were only ajar at the exhibition opening. Rudy Burckhardt took the first and only known photograph of *Short Circuit* in its original form. The open doors show Johns's flag and a brushy scene painted by Weil.

In 1955 Johns was making Flag, the one we know, the one at MoMA, which the artist claimed to have dreamed about and then woken up and made. The art historian Leo Steinberg's prediction that Rauschenberg would generate "dissertations galore, including of the fine print in the newspaper scraps that abound in Rauschenberg's pictures," applies to Johns as well. Flag is commonly dated 1954-55, but in her 1977 infrared imaging analysis titled "The Infra-Iconography of Jasper Johns," art historian Joan Carpenter tells of a visitor to MoMA in the '70s who noticed Flag contains a newspaper fragment clearly dating from 1956. The work was repaired after being damaged during a party in the studio, the artist explained. Similarly, I dated a fragment integral to the field of stars in the flag to a news report about the Eisenhower campaign from late May 1955, after the Stable Annual had closed. Whether or not Johns had begun Flag before he made the Short Circuit flag, he had not finished it by that time. The Short Circuit flag came first.

Rauschenberg made many Combines, including one he called *Plymouth Rock*, but which is officially untitled. Like *Short Circuit* it is full of autobiographical and familial references. There is a

stuffed hen below a picture of Rauschenberg's sister as a small-town beauty queen, a washed-out head shot of Johns, a photo of an infant Christopher, and a heartbreaking note, obviously added later, in Christopher's kindergarten scrawl ("I hope that you still like me Bob cause I still love you. Please wright me back love LOVE Christopher.") Rauschenberg and Johns frequently altered and added to works that sat in their Fulton Street studios for years before the spotlight fixed on them in 1958.

There is no mention of *Short Circuit* in any account of the momentous 1957 visit Leo Castelli and his wife Ileana Sonnabend made to Rauschenberg's studio, where they first met Johns and offered him a show on the spot. (Rauschenberg got the next one on the schedule.) *Short Circuit* figured into no reviews of either artist's debut exhibitions; if anything, their supporters officially ignored Rauschenberg and Johns's collaboration and took care to differentiate the artist-couple and their work.

Cornell University included *Short Circuit* in a group show about assemblage that opened in March 1958 and was on view during Rauschenberg's debut at Castelli and just after John's own premiere, which made him into an overnight star. Alan Solomon, who organized the Cornell show, would go on to curate both precocious

ABOVE Diptych of Rauschenberg and his dog Laika in Rauschenberg's Lafayette Street studio, New York, ca. 1967.



artists' solo exhibitions at the Jewish Museum, in 1963 and 1964, respectively. Solomon never referred to *Short Circuit* again, and his shows put an early critical emphasis on the artists' independence and differences from each other, in both practice and personality.

At the time of the Cornell show, Combines were still not called Combines; they were "assemblages" or "constructions." Much later, Calvin Tomkins wrote in the *New Yorker* in 2005, Johns would remember coming up with the term Combine. Rauschenberg remembered otherwise. *Short Circuit*, too, was not yet called *Short Circuit*; the first mention of that title was at the Finch College show in 1967. Both Solomon's Cornell exhibition checklist and a 1958 inventory in Castelli's archive refer to the piece as "Construction with J.J. Flag."

over irreconcilable professional, aesthetic, and romantic conflicts. They each owned significant amounts of each other's works, but only one work was the subject of an agreement over its fate: Short Circuit. This agreement came to light in 1962, when a dispute arose over the sale of images of Short Circuit by a subscription slide service called Portable Gallery Press. Editor Albert Vanderburg wrote that Short Circuit was an example of a more established artist giving newcomers a "helping hand" with their careers. That prompted Rauschenberg to deny Portable

Gallery permission to sell slides of the Combine. (They had taken pictures of the piece while documenting other artworks in Castelli's Lower East Side warehouse.) Vanderburg complained that the decision was part of a "cover-up of political maneuvering." That charge, according to a tale Vanderburg loves retelling, including in an email to me, prompted Castelli to call him a "bitch" on the phone. In response to Vanderburg, Johns wrote a letter, published in the December 1962 issue of the Portable Gallery Bulletin. It is a powerful declaration of an artist's agency, and his only public statement about *Short Circuit*:

Dear Sir:

I've always supposed that artists were allowed to paint however-whatever they pleased and to do whatever they please with their work—or not to give, sell, lend, allow reproduction, rework, destroy, repair, or exhibit it... Rauschenberg's decision was part of a solution of differences of opinion between him and me over commercial and aesthetic values relating to that work. The painting itself has been publicly exhibited at least twice and, I believe, slides of it have been used in connection with public lectures.

The solution to these differences of opinion was to not show, publish, or sell the work with Johns's flag in it. In Vanderburg's own telling on his website, Portable Gallery decided to offer the

Short Circuit slide for free to purchasers of their 1963 Pop art slide package. As for Short Circuit itself, the piece stayed in Castelli's warehouse, at 25 First Avenue in downtown Manhattan, until at least 1965. From this point there are two slightly different versions of the story, both of which come from Castelli. The first is the public one, which Castelli told Michael Crichton in an interview for the Whitney Museum's 1977 Johns retrospective catalogue, and which echoed through the writings of New Yorker scribe Calvin Tomkins.

According to this version, and the Castelli Gallery's paper trail, the *Short Circuit* flag was stolen sometime "before June 8, 1965," which was a Tuesday. The date Castelli gave the insurance company was June 6, a Sunday. Line that up with Crichton's footnote on the "curious historical incident," in which "one day, [Castelli] examined the painting and discovered that the Johns flag had been stolen." But it was only "years later," Castelli told Crichton, that "a dealer—we do not need to say who"—brought a flag to the gallery for authentication, a flag which Castelli recognized immediately as the missing Combine flag. The dealer said he couldn't leave the work with the gallery, and, Castelli said, "he was very insistent, so I said, 'Well, all right.' I never saw the painting again."

But in June 1965 Castelli filed a report with the NYPD 9th Precinct, which covers the Lower East Side, stating the theft occurred on April 15, nearly two months earlier. Edward Meneeley, an artist, photographer, and the publisher of Portable Gallery, recalled to me a very tense spring and summer in 1965, when he was shooting works for Ileana Sonnabend in the same warehouse where Castelli stashed *Short Circuit*. Meneeley "and everyone else" who had access to the warehouse were asked several times, he said, if they knew, saw, or heard anything about the missing flag.

This sequence fits better with Castelli's second version of the story, which is really the first. It comes from a transcript of a 14-hour oral-history interview for the Archives of American Art, conducted by Paul Cummings in 1973. Though it was digitized in 2011 and is now readily available online, the transcript used to be restricted, and reviewing it required Castelli's permission until 1993. (Castelli died in 1999.) In this telling, a dealer sought to authenticate "a very pretty flag of Jasper Johns's":

So he came with the flag and there it was, the flag that was inside the painting! I sent somebody down to the warehouse, and I told them to open that case and see if the painting of the flag was there, and it wasn't there. So I said, "This is a stolen flag, so please leave it here." He said, "No, it's been given to me by somebody who would suffer direly if I didn't give it back to her... please let me take care of it. I'll get it to you." I said, "Alright, if you promise that you'll take care of it and get it back and straighten it out with her." I never got it right back. He made a terrible, hysterical scene and said, "I must have the flag back."... and the flag disappeared for good.

It would seem that when they learned of the theft, Castelli and company scrambled to figure out who was involved. When they couldn't get the flag back by June, a police report and an insurance claim (according to Castelli's notebook it was for "JJ," not "RR")

were filed. In the copy of the report he left behind, the insurance agent, named Mellors, noted the flag's dimensions (13¼ by 17¼ inches) and upped the initial value from \$5,000 to \$12,000. Mellors said that, in addition to the Johns, a small 1964 Roy Lichtenstein sculpture edition was also missing. The following week the gallery sent a cursory note to the Art Dealers Association of America that read, "Enclosed please find a photograph of the Rauschenberg work from which the Jasper Johns flag was stolen," but with no titles, dates, details, or dimensions. According to the Art Loss Register (ALR), which was the successor to the International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR), whose Stolen Art Alert list was the successor to the ADAA's registry, no report of a missing Rauschenberg or Johns comes close to matching the *Short Circuit* flag.

It is here that the narratives of *Short Circuit* and its flag inevitably diverge. There is no contemporary record of Rauschenberg or Johns's response to the flag's disappearance. In a 2011 lecture on *Short Circuit*, Art Institute curator (now director) James Rondeau said, "Bob actually called Jasper and said, 'Jasper, the flag is missing. What do we do?' And Jasper, according to the literature and my interviews, says two words: 'Call Elaine"—meaning Elaine Sturtevant, an appropriation artist who had been making direct copies of work by Andy Warhol, Lichtenstein, and Johns. Sturtevant and Rauschenberg were friends. They posed together in the buff for a re-creation of Duchamp's *Adam and Eve* in 1967, the same year they also shared a bill, along with Rauschenberg's new boyfriend, dancer Steve Paxton, on the School of Visual Art's fall performance calendar.

To the many inquiries I've made to Johns over the years of my search for the Short Circuit flag, he responded once to say he had no involvement in the decision to replace his flag with Sturtevant's, a decision that stems from 1967, the year Rauschenberg fielded a request from Finch College Museum curator Elayne Varian, who wanted to include Short Circuit in a traveling exhibition, "Art in Process: The Visual Development of a Collage." In the thin catalogue for that show, Rauschenberg posed with Short Circuit, its door propped open, but the cupboard was still bare. "Because Jasper Johns's flag for the collage was stolen," Rauschenberg wrote in the catalogue, "Elaine Sturtevant is painting an original flag in the manner of Jasper Johns to replace it. This collage is a documentation of a particular event at a particular time and is still being affected. It is a double document." A double document at least. The future tense of Rauschenberg's statement sent me looking for reviews of the ten venues for Varian's show. If Sturtevant's flag got in there in time, no one saw it, because according to all reports, Short Circuit's doors were nailed shut.

harles Yoder, a Rauschenberg assistant, remembers seeing Sturtevant's flag in *Short Circuit* in 1971.

Castelli called it "ugly" in his 1973 oral-history interview. According to his notes in the Smithsonian Archives, curator Walter Hopps, who organized a Rauschenberg retrospective in 1976 at the National Collection of Fine Arts,

held out hope that the original flag might be found in time for the show. When that didn't happen, Rauschenberg wrote that he might paint a replacement himself, both "to rid myself of the bad memories surrounding the theft" and because he "need[ed] the therapy." The only existing photo of Short Circuit with Johns's flag is in the catalogue, but in the last draft of the exhibition checklist, Hopps dropped Short Circuit from the show. Other curators who visited Rauschenberg's studio lamented the Combine's condition or its unavailability. It was not until Paul Schimmel's 2005 to 2007 traveling show of Rauschenberg's Combines that a full color image of Short Circuit with Sturtevant's Johns Flag was published. It turns out Sturtevant's flag was installed higher than the original, in order to accommodate a stamped label strip below it that reads, "The original Jasper Johns Flag was stolen in 1965. It is replaced by an original Sturtevant 1967," which clears that up.

And what of the original flag? In 2010 I called Ivan Karp, Castelli's longtime consigliere, who told me that the dealer who had gone to Castelli in 1965 to authenticate the stolen flag was Robert Elkon, and that his client, so to speak, was Gertrude Stein (of Madison Avenue, not Rue du Fleurus). Elkon and Stein both ran secondary-market galleries; the former died in 1983, but the latter is still around and dealing. (Elkon and Stein had been embroiled in a lawsuit in 1993 over the 1967 sale of a Chagall gouache, which turned out to have been stolen from the Guggenheim in 1965. The museum, hoping to avoid publicity and suspecting an inside job, had never reported the painting's disappearance. Stein, Elkon's estate, and their buyer agreed to pay the museum in a confidential settlement.) Stein and I spoke many times over the years I spent looking into the flag, most often when I dialed from unrecognized numbers. Though I never pressed, I came to believe that she did indeed have some firsthand knowledge of the Short Circuit flag.

The last piece of evidence I found, Castelli's previously restricted 1973 interview, was the most startling. This was not because Castelli offhandedly fingered Elkon and Stein in his story, or because of the matter-of-fact way with which he declared, "The flag disappeared for good." I doubt he didn't care; he must have known what happened to the flag, or known someone who did. What really caught me by surprise was Castelli's candor in stating what seems obvious, but which was denied or refuted for so long.

CASTELLI: There were three people that were the gallery: myself, Rauschenberg, and Johns. As a matter of fact it was Rauschenberg hyphen Johns, because they seem to be sort of always mentioned in the same breath: Rauschenberg and Johns. As a matter of fact, later on Johns got (there were other reasons too) got so irked by this constant coupling that occurs that he—this is certainly one of the reasons why he broke with Rauschenberg.

CUMMINGS: Really?



CASTELLI: Because he just did not want to be constantly mentioned in the same breath as Rauschenberg. Well there were other reasons of course, they started diverging also on aesthetic grounds and so on. Rauschenberg did not approve of the direction that Johns was taking and Johns didn't approve of what Rauschenberg was doing.

Rauschenberg-Johns. These two great artists had diverged, but before that, they were totally in sync, influencing each other and developing and making their work together. *Short Circuit* and its flag were the fulcrum of their relationship and their early practice. And it was gone.

After reading Castelli's interview, I called Stein one more time, for the first time in almost a year, and asked her if Castelli and Elkon could have simply quietly sold the flag back to Johns, at which point Stein hung up on me. I guess we'll never know.

ABOVE Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg at Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles, 1980.

1985-86



NEW YORK GALLERIST ANDREW CRISPO IS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF A COLLEGE STUDENT

n Saint Patrick's Day in 1985, a party of young boys hiking in upstate New York encountered the partially burned body of Eigil Dag Vesti, a Fashion Institute of Technology student from Norway. The boys had wandered onto the property of Bernard LeGeros, an employee of New York art dealer Andrew Crispo and Crispo's unofficial henchman of sorts. Vesti's head, the only part of his body still intact, was encased in a black leather bondage hood.

Thus began the strange, high-profile case of Andrew Crispo, the sadomasochistic art dealer who allegedly ordered Vesti's execution inside the basement "dungeon" of LeGeros's summer home. In a 1988 Vanity Fair article, David France, who would go on to author an entire book about the case entitled Bag of Toys: Sex, Scandal, and the Death Mask Murder, wrote:

The din of their sadomasochistic encounter grew so loud, LeGeros would later say, that he went to the second floor and turned up a radio to escape the noise. As the sun came up, Crispo emerged from the basement, dragging a handcuffed Vesti—naked except for a black leather hood, a jockstrap, and a dog collar on the end of a leash.... "He's ready, he wants to die. Shoot him," Crispo said, and LeGeros did, pumping two bullets into the back of Vesti's head.

Much has been speculated regarding Crispo's Svengali-like power over LeGeros, who had a troubled childhood and was reportedly obsessed with death and dying. He was hired to act as a liaison between Crispo and his lawyers but "soon became [Crispo's] eyes and ears in the gallery," France wrote, and rarely spoke in the dealer's presence. Meanwhile, Crispo was spending more and more money on more and more cocaine, sometimes going through seven grams a day. Handsome young gay men often spent time in Crispo's gallery on 57th Street after hours; they stopped by to sell drugs, but ended up staying to partake in kinky sexual encounters that surpassed the goings-on at popular gay leather bars of the day, like Hellfire or Mineshaft. In describing one such event, one of Crispo's circle told France, "It was weird, because in my mind it was a rape scene, not an actual rape, you know. It was supposed to be kinky, not a crime...until the guy got real tense and said, 'Stop, you're hurting me.' And I didn't stop, and I didn't say anything."

During the trial LeGeros's lawyer reminded press that Vesti was found wearing a bondage mask and handcuffs owned by Crispo, and had marks from whips that also belonged to Crispo. But the defense's argument suffered a blow when one of LeGeros's old friends testified that LeGeros had told him "if he was caught he would say Crispo was keeping him filled up with drugs and he was controlling him and he didn't know what he was doing." LeGeros, who is currently serving a 25-year-to-life sentence at Rikers, told France that all loyalty he felt for Crispo disappeared when the dealer refused to provide an alibi for him.

Crispo walked away from the murder without a single charge, though he did end up serving jail time. In November 1985 Crispo pled guilty to evading taxes on \$4 million of income and was later sentenced to five years in prison. (He served three.) In 1999 he was convicted of plotting to abduct the young daughter of a lawyer who didn't release money to him fast enough, and was sentenced to a maximum of 20 years in prison.

At the time of Vesti's murder, however, the popular legal opinion was that a conviction for Crispo would be difficult to stick. Stanley Arkin, one of Crispo's attorneys, asked the court, "What if, when the gun went off and the body fell, my client had no idea it was a real gun, or that LeGeros would really pull the trigger? What if it came as a complete, horrifying shock to him?"

-H.G.

ABOVE Courtroom illustration from the Andrew Crispo trial in 1985–86.

DREAD SCOTT'S FLAG BURNING LEADS TO A SUPREME COURT CASE OVER FREEDOM OF SPEECH

1989

n 1989 Scott Tyler, a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, invited viewers to step on an American flag as part of his multimedia installation What Is the Proper Way to Display a U.S. Flag? (1988). His audience was asked to write down their reactions to this flag, as well as images of other American flags. A sample comment: "As a veteran defending the flag I personally would never defend your stupid ass! You should be shot!"

Tyler's project went on to inspire national outrage. President George H. W. Bush even chimed in at one point, saying, "I don't approve of it at all." By 1990 the work had even indirectly led to a Supreme Court case: *United States v. Eichman et al.*, which focused on whether Americans had the right to desecrate their nation's flag. Tyler, who now goes by the name Dread Scott, probably never expected his installation to cause such furor. After all, the flag's physical specs belied its grand significance: According to a *New York Times* article from 1989, the 3-by-5-foot flag used for the installation was bought for \$3.95. It was manufactured not in the United States, nor even in North America, but in Taiwan. On his website, Scott has written of his work:

America was forged by genocide and slavery and carries out profound exploitation and oppressions of whole peoples and vast regions of the planet to maintain this lopsided relationship. It doesn't have to be this way and I personally look forward to the day when America and its flag are in the dustbin of history and people are striving to build a world of freely associating human beings, free of exploitation. In this spirit I created a conceptual artwork where people could engage the question of what U.S. patriotism and the U.S. flag represents.

A discussion about images of America was hardly what the people wanted, however. In the final weeks of the work's exhibition, veterans rolled up the flag any time someone went to stand on it. When that failed to make a point, veterans' groups tried to sue the Art Institute of Chicago. (A county circuit court judge refused to see the lawsuit in court.)

On March 16, however, the veterans got their wish when the Chicago City Council closed the Art Institute of Chicago show, citing an ordinance that made flag desecration illegal. Within days, the U.S. Senate had unanimously passed a law with a similar purpose. "Now, I don't know much about art, but I know desecration when I see it," said Bob Dole, the Republican Senate majority leader at the time. In the months that followed, the Senate virtually defunded the Art Institute of Chicago, cutting its financial support from \$13,000 to \$1.

In reaction to this, Tyler, along with fellow artist Shawn Eichman and Vietnam War veteran David Blalock, burned flags on the steps of the Capitol. This raised more questions about how far U.S. citizens would go in the name of art.



Was flag desecration a form of free speech protected under U.S. law?

In 1990 *United States v. Eichman et al.*, which combined the Capitol Hill flag burnings with another case of desecration, headed to the Supreme Court. Within a month, the case reached a five-to-four ruling in Tyler, Eichman, and Blalock's favor. Flag desecration was now a legalized form of free speech.

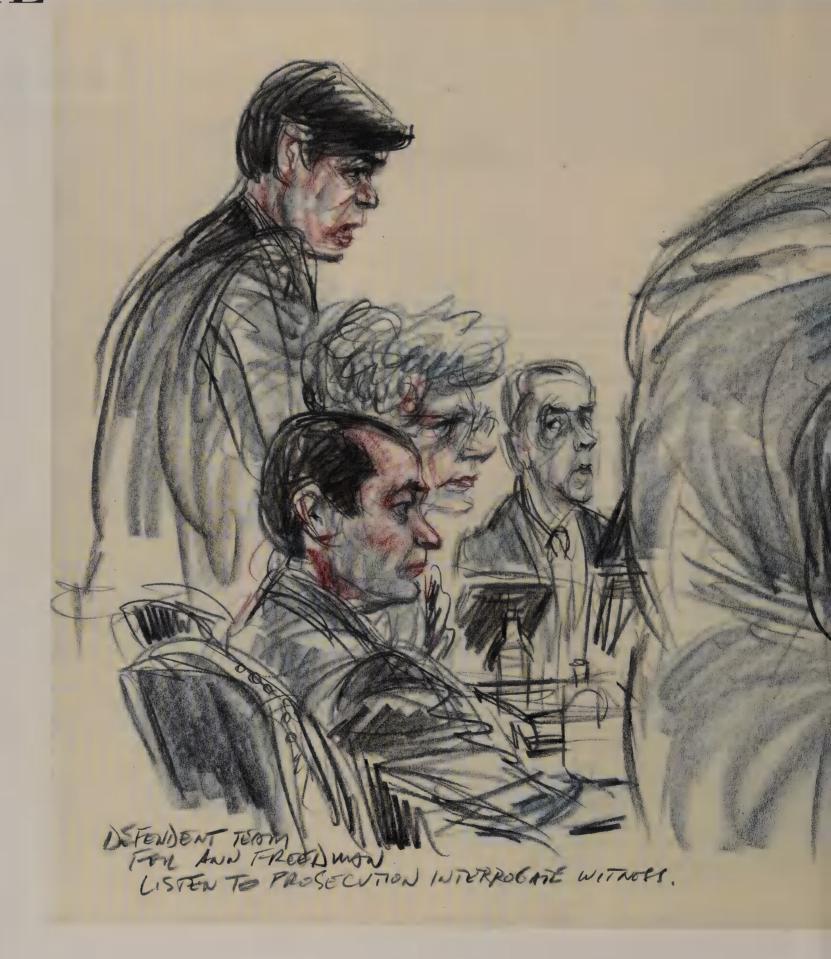
This past year, at the Brooklyn Museum, Dread Scott reflected on the Supreme Court case. Citing Bush's negative comments about his scandalous work, Scott said, "And so I'm like, 'Wait, this is great. This is a job I want to do for the rest of my life!' I knew it wouldn't happen to me or other artists again, but it showed the power of art."

-A.G.

ABOVE Dread Scott burning a flag on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in 1989.

BIG

THE





Behind the scenes of Knoedler gallery's downfall

BY M. H. MILLER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VICTOR JUHASZ

omenico and Eleanore De Sole live most of the year in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Domenico is originally from Calabria, and he grew up in a military family, moving all around Italy. He got a law degree from Harvard in 1972, but he's no longer a member of the bar. He made his fortune in the fashion industry, first as the CEO of the Gucci Group, and then as a cofounder of Tom Ford International with the label's namesake. Eleanore describes herself as "Domenico's unpaid secretary." They are collectors and major patrons of the arts. Domenico currently serves as the chairman of the board of directors at Sotheby's, but when it comes to their art purchases, Eleanore makes all the decisions. Still, they would not describe themselves as art experts per se. Domenico is more comfortable talking about handbags.

On a trip to New York in November 2004, the De Soles visited the Knoedler & Co. gallery on the Upper East Side of Manhattan for the first and last time. They went there to inquire about buying a work by artist Sean Scully, who had been represented by Knoedler off and on for years, and met with Ann Freedman, the gallery's president. She told them she did not have any work by Scully available, but she did have a painting—right there in her office—that she said was by Mark Rothko.

Freedman explained that a very private Swiss collector had owned the work, and that his family wanted to remain anonymous. After short deliberations, the De Soles wanted to buy the painting. They paid Knoedler \$8.3 million, the most the couple had ever spent on a work of art by a wide margin. The invoice for the Rothko lists the buyer as Laura De Sole, the couple's oldest daughter, so that it would be clear that the painting would go to her after the De Soles died. Laura and her sister, Rickie, "they fight," in Domenico's words. Eleanore was slightly more morbid. After the couple was

LEFT Ann Freedman and her defense team.

dead and buried, she said, "I didn't want to roll over in my grave." The family planned on owning the work for a long time.

More than a decade after that meeting at the gallery, and two years after their Rothko was revealed to be a fake, the De Soles would tell a jury that Freedman and Knoedler had knowingly conned them out of seven figures. But, Domenico would testify, back in 2004 he and his wife had "no reason to believe someone was lying" to them. After all, they were dealing with Knoedler—"the most trusted, oldest, most important gallery," he said.

noedler & Co. opened in New York City in 1846 and ran more or less continuously until closing abruptly at the end of 2011. Knoedler went into business almost a quarter of a century before the Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded. When the gallery started, California was not yet a U.S. state. Knoedler would become a leading supplier of Old Master paintings to the robber barons of the Gilded Age, counting among its clients Cornelius Vanderbilt, J. P. Morgan, and Henry Clay Frick. The gallery helped create an art market in America. For years the business was described as a framer and "picture manufacturer"—its existence predated the very idea of a storefront business that sold art. The gallery weathered 165 years of American history and changing tastes.

But in the second half of the 20th century, as the market for contemporary art expanded dramatically, Knoedler suffered. In 1970, after spending a large sum on a town house at 19 East 70th Street, the gallery was nearly bankrupt. In 1971 Armand Hammer, the oil magnate who eventually founded his own private museum in Los Angeles, purchased the business for \$2.5 million. Knoedler survived, mostly on the strength of one of its greatest directors, Lawrence Rubin, who shifted the business's focus to more contemporary fare, bringing on artists like Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Diebenkorn, Frank Stella, and Scully. Rubin also hired Freedman, then a 29-year-old receptionist from a rival gallery, who quickly rose to the position of president, and, in 1994, became Knoedler's director.

By all appearances, the gallery prospered under Freedman—she was a natural salesperson, and her Rolodex included David Geffen and the Taubman family, as well as every imaginable museum director—but the year she took over was also the beginning of Knoedler's ultimate downfall; it was the same year a woman from Long Island no one in the art world had ever heard of, named Glafira Rosales, walked into the gallery and met with Freedman for the first time. Between 1994 and 2008, the year before Freedman quietly resigned, Rosales, with the alleged help of her boyfriend, Jose Carlos Bergantiños Diaz, his brother Jesus, and Pei-Shen Qian, a Chinese immigrant living in Queens, conducted an \$80 million forgery ring through Knoedler, selling or consigning 40 expertly crafted counterfeits—the De Soles' painting among them—that Rosales claimed were by Abstract Expressionists, including giants like Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, and Rothko.

Knoedler received a grand jury subpoena in 2009, but details of Rosales's conspiracy only became known to the public after they seeped into the press, a few days after Knoedler closed in November 2011. Freedman and the gallery have been in litigation ever since. In 2013 Rosales admitted that the works she brought to Knoedler were all fakes, painted by Qian in his studio in Woodhaven, and pled guilty to various charges, including tax evasion and wire fraud. She is awaiting sentencing. The Diaz brothers were arrested the following year in Spain, having fled the United States, and have yet to be extradited as of this writing. Qian was indicted, but has since returned to China, where he maintains he didn't know his paintings were being passed off as the work of famous artists. Up until Rosales's guilty plea, Freedman insisted that the works were real, and that she would be vindicated. After the plea, Freedman described herself in an interview with New York magazine as Rosales's "central victim."

The art market is notoriously opaque—the cliché is that it is the largest unregulated industry in the world, besides guns and drugs. There are certain rules, but chief among them is an almost pathological level of discretion. There is little oversight, and players can get away with a lot of ethically dubious behavior. Many of the collectors who purchased fake works from Knoedler did not veer from this privacy, choosing instead to settle with the gallery out of court. But last winter the De Soles, unable to reach an agreement with Knoedler, made it to trial. It took four years to get there. The De Soles and their legal team argued that for its final 15 years Knoedler was a racketeering operation, and they were suing for triple damages—\$25 million—under federal RICO laws. The gallery, Freedman, and the gallery's holding company, 8-31 Holdings—owned by Armand Hammer's grandson, Michael—were all defendants.

The trial unearthed one of the greatest scandals the art world has ever seen and laid bare the chain of suspicious decisions that brought down what had once been a storied gallery. The details of Knoedler's collapse offer a kind of clarity that is typically nonexistent in this business, raising all sorts of questions about whether the lack of transparency at the high end of the art market will be viable in the future.

he trial began in Southern District Court in Manhattan on a Monday in January 2016, and lasted three weeks. Behind a screen in the courtroom was the fake Rothko, which would occasionally be brought out during testimony for the jury to see. The painting had hung in the De Soles' house for about six years, behind expensive glass casing and rigged to an alarm system; in the courtroom, it was handled roughly, like a piece of cardboard.

From day one, the De Soles did little to mask their contempt for Freedman. When Knoedler's lawyers did cross-examinations, Domenico would shake his head and laugh in exasperation. He had a tendency to pull reporters aside, usually during breaks, but sometimes not, and whisper not-to-be-quoted tirades about how Knoedler perpetrated a fraud.

Like many collectors, Domenico first suspected that the work he bought from Knoedler was a fake when, in late 2011, the *New*



York Times published an article about a lawsuit that had been filed by another duped collector, Pierre Lagrange. Domenico seemed to have spent a lot of time over the last five years thinking about Knoedler, and to be relieved to have a room of interested listeners to whom he could vent. I had a clear sense that he was not wearing his best suits to the courthouse.

Eleanore was less outspoken than her husband. Her face would simply stretch into a sarcastic smile when Knoedler's lawyers tried to discredit the plaintiffs' witnesses. Occasionally, she would quietly cry into a tissue. The contrast between the De Soles and Freedman was pointed. Freedman was stone-faced throughout the trial, and she seemed to avoid eye contact with everyone, especially the members of the jury. She dressed as if attending a funeral, in black, beige, or gray.

The De Soles had three main presenting attorneys—Gregory Clarick, Aaron Crowell, and Emily Reisbaum. Clarick, a compact bald man, was chipper in the courtroom and never once showed any frustration, always managing to crack an awkward smile no matter the circumstance. Crowell had the unique ability to ask a

ABOVE Domenico De Sole on the witness stand

witness a question as if he hadn't asked it over and over again for four years, as if he really was just curious and wanted to know the unexpected answer.

Reisbaum was the most relaxed and casual of all the lawyers. She gave the plaintiffs' opening statement, which focused on the six "red flags" that formed the backbone of the De Soles' case against Knoedler: Freedman knew nothing of Rosales before she came into Knoedler and had no reason to trust her; no one had ever seen or heard of the works Rosales was bringing in, and there was no documentation—receipts, sales records, photographs—to corroborate their existence; Rosales offered the works at "bargainbasement prices," and Knoedler made massive profits in selling them, profits Reisbaum described as "not normal"; Knoedler paid Rosales for the works partly by wire transfer, partly by check, and partly with a cash payment usually just under \$10,000, the federal bank reporting requirement; Knoedler and Freedman not only didn't know Rosales's source for the works, they "actually made up the story about where the works came from" themselves, Reisbaum said; beginning in 1994, when the gallery sold the first Rosales work, various experts voiced suspicions about the collection. The case hinged on whether or not Freedman and others at Knoedler

were in on Rosales's scheme. (Freedman herself has not been indicted on criminal charges.)

After showing some images of Rothko's work to the jury, Reisbaum said, "Now, not everybody likes this kind of art, but many people do." Of Freedman, she added, "She was lying. We will give you the evidence that will show you she was lying to the De Soles about everything she said."

uke Nikas, Freedman's attorney, claimed his client had vetted the Rosales paintings, including the De Soles', with leading experts—conservators, historians, connoisseurs—all of whom supported the works. The painting was even briefly exhibited at the Beyeler Foundation, a private museum in Switzerland. "When the whole art world says it's impossible that these works are forgeries," Nikas said, could the plaintiffs prove that Freedman knew they were?



Nikas spoke in a dramatic, brooding tone that contradicted his boyish face. During cross-examination, he would often spend half an hour or more simply establishing what a person does in her job, only to use that information later to shatter her credibility. Freedman traded genuine works from her own collection for some of the Rosales works, he said, and purchased others. A purported Jackson Pollock—with the signature misspelled ("Pollok")—hung in her apartment for 15 years. Nikas went on to argue in his opening that Freedman's enthusiasm for the Rosales works "crumbles the foundation of the plaintiffs' argument" that Freedman was knowingly misrepresenting the paintings as authentic to her clients. As he said this, he played an animated video on the courtroom screen that showed a house crumbling because of its weak foundation.

Nikas's whole presentation took 90 minutes and included footage from the 2000 film *Pollock*, directed by Ed Harris. This was an attempt to prove that Pollock's penchant for alcohol (the scene presented in court had the artist, played by Harris, drinking a beer on a bicycle) meant that he and his contemporaries kept poor records of their work. It was natural, Nikas argued, for Freedman to believe a work was by Pollock, even if, as was the case with all of the works Rosales brought to Knoedler, it had never been shown publicly and was not published in the painter's catalogue raisonné (the list of all known works by an artist; Pollock's was first published, as a four-volume set, in 1978).

Buffering Nikas was Charles Schmerler, who represented Knoedler and 8-31 Holdings at trial. Schmerler grew up in Plano, Texas, and looks like Edward G. Robinson. During the trial, he occasionally came across as a plainspoken everyman that a juror might want to have a beer with. (His laconicism took on a more foreboding tone later in the trial.) "I want you to put aside the fancy art words like 'connoisseurship' and 'catalogue raisonné' that the supposed experts use," he said in his opening. On the courtroom screen, he projected a scoreboard, which listed what he claimed to be the facts of the case. The scoreboard had buzzer sound effects that went off every time he produced a new fact. The judge, Paul G. Gardephe, who said on several occasions that his preference was to meet on federal holidays and who never let court out before 5 P.M., was having none of this. Gardephe frowned throughout almost the entire trial—his face drooped in either heavy concentration or mere annoyance. He would sometimes uphold an objection by saying, "Sustained, sustained, sustained," in the tone of a disappointed parent, with a heavy exhale and a slow shake of his head, as if the lawyer should have known better than to do something that would be objected to. "Please cut out the sound effects," he told Schmerler.

Clarick, Crowell, and Reisbaum had to prove that Freedman acted with fraudulent intent and not just negligence—a tall order, according to Nikas and Schmerler. (Nikas, in fact, presented

LEFT Melissa De Medeiros, Ann Freedman's former assistant and a Knoedler researcher.

a short animation in his own opening that addressed this difficulty: it showed a stick figure climbing up a tall mountain, and atop the mountain was the word "fraud.")

"They want you to believe that Ann Freedman fooled the entire world," Schmerler said, in disbelief.

omenico testified that Freedman told him and his wife that eleven experts had authenticated the Rothko. He was careful to use the word "authenticate." The defense's argument was that no one person authenticates a work, and that even the combined opinions of many experts is not binding. The De Soles' lawyers argued that Freedman presented the work as authentic without disclosing any of the questions surrounding where it came from.

All of the Rosales works supposedly came from a collector who had made his riches in the sugar business and had homes in Switzerland and Mexico. Freedman told collectors he was very secretive and wished to remain anonymous—but few people besides Freedman's assistant and other gallery employees she had tasked with doing research on the Rosales works were aware that even Freedman didn't know who the collector was. He had obtained the works directly from the studios of Abstract Expressionist artists, she said. When he died, his son wanted Rosales's help to sell some of the works. This was the story, anyway, that Rosales had presented to Freedman. Rosales's name, both De Soles said, did not come up in their conversation with Freedman.

Around Knoedler, the anonymous collector came to be known as "Mr. X." Freedman also referred to him as "Secret Santa," former Knoedler employees testified. Over time, as Knoedler sold the Rosales works, the identity of Mr. X remained a mystery, but the gallery's story of the paintings' provenance—the history of who had previously owned the works and when—shifted. First, the claim was that Alfonso Ossorio, a friend of Jackson Pollock and his contemporaries, had brokered Mr. X's purchases. But no evidence could be found that Ossorio, a familiar figure to historians of Abstract Expressionism who was known for keeping detailed records, had any connection to a Swiss collector.

By the time the De Soles arrived at Knoedler, Freedman was using the late David Herbert to explain the Rosales works. Herbert, who died in 1995, was a former low-level employee at the two leading New York galleries that showed the Abstract Expressionists in their prime, in the 1950s—Sidney Janis and Betty Parsons. The story became richer when Herbert's name was floated in connection to the paintings: Mr. X and Herbert had engaged in a love affair. This was why the collector, who was married and had a family, wanted his name to be kept secret.

At the trial, several former Knoedler employees—including Melissa De Medeiros, who was Freedman's assistant, and Edye Weissler, the gallery's librarian—said they had done research into the provenance of the Rosales works to find documentation

"It is with profound regret that the owners of Knoedler Gallery announce its closing, effective November 30, 2011. This was a business decision made after careful consideration over the course of an extended period of time. Gallery staff are assisting with an orderly winding down of Knoedler Gallery.



that proved the paintings were purchased decades ago by a Swiss collector with the help of either Ossorio or Herbert. Of course, no such documentation ever existed. Mr. X was the creation of Rosales. Still, the names of either Ossorio or Herbert appear on many Knoedler invoices describing the provenance of the Rosales works. With her vague story in place, Rosales brought a few paintings a year to Knoedler, often rolled up in the backseat of her Mercedes.

efore the sale of the Rothko went ahead, the De Soles requested the details of their conversation with Freedman be put in writing. The subsequent letter that Freedman sent to the De Soles, in December 2004, was central to the arguments of both the plaintiffs and the defendants. It says that the Rothko had "been viewed by the following individuals with special expertise on the work of Mark Rothko," going on to list the eleven experts Freedman supposedly named in their meeting. The De Soles' lawyers claimed that this document strongly implied that Freedman had these experts authenticate the work; Nikas and Schmerler claimed that the letter only meant that Freedman had shown the work to those people. The list includes Laili Nasr, who was making a supplement to the Rothko catalogue raisonné; Christopher Rothko, the artist's son; art historians Irving Sandler, Stephen Polcari, and David Anfam, the author of the catalogue raisonné for Rothko's works on canvas; and E. A. Carmean Jr., a former curator at the National Gallery of Art who had been put on retainer by Knoedler for upward of \$50,000



a year, primarily to research the provenance of Rosales's works. Polcari and Carmean had put their opinions about the validity of the Rosales works into writing. ("I too am convinced of their quality and authenticity," Polcari wrote in reference to the entire Rosales collection in an essay, composed at Freedman's request, about what turned out to be a fake Robert Motherwell.)

But Anfam testified that he was never asked to give his opinion on the Rothko, and worse, he never saw it in person, only in pictures that Freedman had sent to him after the De Soles purchased it. He said Freedman including him on a document of experts who had viewed a work would "constitute a proxy authentication," and that doing so was "outrageous." "You don't put people's names on lists of anything without asking their consent," Anfam said.

Others whose names appeared on the list echoed this sentiment. Sandler testified that he had no knowledge his name was being used on a document presented to prospective buyers, and that he'd looked at a supposed Rothko in Freedman's office for "5 to 20 seconds," but he couldn't recall if it was the painting the De Soles ended up buying. He said he does not authenticate works of art. "I never have and I never will." Rothko gave similar testimony, saying he stays clear of offering opinions on the authenticity of his father's work so that he doesn't end up in court. He said, however, that he saw the De Soles' Rothko and recalled telling Freedman it was "pristine."

Carmean and Polcari were big supporters of the Rosales works, praising them in internal Knoedler documents and ignoring many warning signs. In 2002 a collector named Jack Levy submitted a

Rosales Pollock he purchased from Knoedler to the International Foundation for Art Research, the main source for authenticating works by Pollock and other Abstract Expressionists. IFAR could not conclusively attribute the work to Pollock. Polcari called the report an "attack," describing it as "amateurish...and irrelevant." And Carmean refuted testing done by forensic analyst James Martin, who has examined many of the Rosales works and found numerous anomalies—including pigment that wasn't invented until long after the supposed dates on the paintings. Carmean dismissed one of Martin's reports on two fake Motherwells as "too broad" and "negative."

Various members of the art world followed all of this testimony intently, including a documentary filmmaker who always took the same seat in the front row; a reporter from the *Art Newspaper* who often had her highly entertained boyfriend with her; a lawyer working on a screenplay about the Knoedler saga; numerous dealers and appraisers who all came and took notes, treating the trial like a cautionary tale; and one very pregnant art adviser who told me that she canceled a sonogram so she wouldn't miss anything. Figures like these within the art world have been calling to reform and regulate how galleries do business for many years, and the Knoedler case gave fuel to that argument. But if the trial has a lasting impact, it will more likely relate to the commentary art experts like Polcari and Carmean are willing to provide. Adam Sheffer, the president of the Art Dealers Association of America, told me that the bond between art historians and galleries might strengthen.

"One positive result may be the reinforcement of the fundamental roles that research and connoisseurship play in the work of an art dealer," he said. "An art dealer's depth of experience working with particular artists, schools, and periods is critical for the long-lasting, trusted relationships that successful gallerists build with both artists and collectors over time."

But Sheffer, who has worked as a dealer for 25 years, also said he had "never seen anything like this situation." In front of the jury, Nikas and Schmerler suggested that the De Soles had placed blind trust in Knoedler and hadn't even bothered to read Freedman's letter, much less reach out to the experts listed on it. This led awkwardly into one of the plaintiffs' major arguments. Domenico said that if he bought a sweater from the Ralph Lauren store, he wouldn't ask a sales clerk if the sweater was a real Ralph Lauren. (Buying a handbag from a Gucci store was floated by his lawyers as a similar example.)

Certainly, the Knoedler saga has raised trust issues. Jason P. Hernandez, an assistant U.S. district attorney who prosecuted Rosales at her criminal trial, told me, "For a long time, buyers were too reliant on the reputation of the gallery that was selling the piece, and really not much more." Hernandez, who is now a litigator in Miami, said that after Knoedler, collectors might start to consider "the legal risk you take by not conducting your own investigation." The De Soles' lawyers, Clarick, Crowell, and Reisbaum, told me that the case might compel galleries to be more up front, but would clearly make collectors more cautious in the long run. "People may be doing more due diligence than they used to," Crowell said, "because now they know, no matter how fancy the gallery, you can't just trust them."

Nikas explained to me that there was legislation pending, proposed by the New York City bar's Art Law Committee, to amend the New York Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, which would encourage scholars to give opinions about the authenticity of a work by protecting them from lawsuits in the event that their opinion was proven wrong. But for now, he said, "Good luck getting anyone to write you a letter about a Jackson Pollock saying it's an authentic work of Jackson Pollock."

hen Freedman took over Knoedler in the mid'90s, the gallery was part of an older generation
that had been overshadowed by more fashionable
businesses downtown, galleries like Gagosian and
Mary Boone, which had prospered throughout the '80s in SoHo
by selling contemporary works to new Wall Street money. The art
market crashed in 1990, but signs of recovery emerged beginning
in 1994, and as the '90s continued, the market for contemporary
art at auction was beginning to overtake the prices commanded by
Impressionist and modern art.

The exit of Knoedler's longtime director Lawrence Rubin triggered an exodus of many of the contemporary artists Rubin had helped bring to the gallery. The initial plan was for Freedman to run the gallery alongside Donald Saff, who had been at Knoedler since 1992 as vice president, but Saff was edged out of his role, demoted to a consultant, supposedly at the request of Michael Hammer. At the time, Saff told the *New York Times* that Freedman had "interfered" with Hammer, and that he was shocked he was being shoved aside. "Between Ann's skills with sales and the contacts I have with artists, this gallery could have been a powerhouse," he said.

What happened instead was laid out in the plaintiffs' case. The first witness was the art historian John Elderfield, a former curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, who testified to seeing, back in 1994, the first two Rosales works Knoedler had sold, paintings supposedly by Diebenkorn. He recalled telling Freedman they were "dubious." "They were bland and flat," he said, adding that Diebenkorn's widow (the artist died in 1993), who accompanied Elderfield on his visit to Knoedler, told Freedman, "It would take a lot to persuade me that these were done by my husband." (Nikas said that the two paintings in question were never at Knoedler at the same time, and that there was no way Elderfield could have seen them together.)

Elderfield spoke so softly that his testimony was nearly nonexistent, but the De Soles were stronger personalities on the stand. Eleanore began crying within about two minutes of starting her testimony. (The tears came at the mention of her deceased parents.) They both testified in front of their fake Rothko. Domenico occasionally looked at it in disgust, and at one point referred to it as a "fraud." Judge Gardephe told Domenico to keep his commentary to himself.

The painting's presence in the courtroom was uncomfortable for everyone. When I looked at it, all I could see was a black

OPPOSITE Plaintiffs Domenico and Eleanore De Sole.

There have been calls to reform and regulate how galleries do business for many years, and the Knoedler case gave fuel to that argument.

splotch of color on top of a red one. "Of course it's a fake," I thought every time I saw it, trying to avoid the possibility that if I viewed it in a museum I likely would have scratched my chin thoughtfully while looking at its majestic colors. Clarick asked Domenico if knowing the painting is a fake has changed its value. Domenico laughed.

"I think so! It's worthless!" At this, he scowled.

As more and more witnesses appeared, it was as if every corner of the usually secretive art world was being called to task. There were at least two art historians who wanted it on the record that they were the pre-eminent scholars in their given field. Roger Seifert, an accountant hired by the plaintiffs, offered a detailed look into Knoedler's books and claimed that the business, in the years it was selling Rosales's works, would not have been profitable—would have, in fact, been millions of dollars in the red—if not for the sale of the forgeries. The defense dismissed these findings as the financial records of a hypothetical business. Martha Parrish, a gallery owner who helped draft ethical guidelines for the Art Dealers Association of America, revealed certain trade secrets. The word "interesting," for instance, "is a code word for 'fake," she said. When asked what a gallery should do if faced with a situation like the one Knoedler faced with Rosales—a virtually unknown figure selling previously unheard of works by beloved artists from an anonymous collector at discount prices—Parrish said a reputable dealer should "run like hell." (Nikas claimed Parrish's testimony was biased, and he filed a motion to have her dismissed, which Gardephe denied.)

Frank Del Deo, a Knoedler employee who had been promoted as Freedman's successor, revealed details of Knoedler's final days. Freedman left the gallery in 2009 for reasons then unknown to the public. In an email from Freedman to Polcari that was presented to the jury, she described being forced out, and how it "hurts like hell." She did not mention the grand jury subpoena, after which the remaining Rosales works in Knoedler's inventory were marked NFS ("Not for Sale") while the FBI investigated them. On the afternoon of November 30, 2011, Del Deo met

with Hammer. In February Hammer had sold the gallery's East 70th Street town house for \$31 million, about half its asking price. There had been talk, Del Deo testified, of relocating Knoedler to Chelsea. Many employees arrived to work on the morning of November 30 thinking it was just another day, including Del Deo. He resigned after his meeting with Hammer, and by early evening the gallery had shuttered for good. An email went out to Knoedler's mailing list that read:

It is with profound regret that the owners of Knoedler Gallery announce its closing, effective [November 30, 2011]. This was a business decision made after careful consideration over the course of an extended period of time. Gallery staff are assisting with an orderly winding down of Knoedler Gallery.

The gallery's final exhibition, of work by sculptor Charles Simonds, was scheduled to run for several more weeks. It seemed as if someone had simply turned off the lights at Knoedler and walked away.

Ruth Blankschen, a former accountant for Knoedler currently serving as the CFO of 8-31 Holdings, revealed—with palpable hesitation—details about cash flow, grudgingly offering a rare peak into the finances at the higher end of the art market. This included the salaries and profit shares of the people running Knoedler. Freedman, according to financial records, made about \$10.4 million off of the sale of the Rosales works over those 15 years, in addition to her \$300,000-a-year base salary.

Blankschen said Hammer, 8-31's owner, collected a salary of \$400,000 a year, plus a 20 percent share of the combined profits of 8-31's subsidiaries, LLCs that included Knoedler and Hammer's own gallery. In addition, Hammer had access to an American Express credit card, Blankschen said, which 8-31 paid for. Between 2001 and 2012, Hammer charged \$1.2 million to the card, a figure that included a \$10,000 trip to Paris with his then wife. 8-31 also purchased several cars for Hammer, including a \$482,000 Rolls Royce, which was sold in 2008 for \$452,000, money that Hammer kept for himself, listing it on his W-2 as part of his salary. That same year, 8-31 purchased a \$523,000 Mercedes for Hammer's exclusive use. The point of exposing all this was to prove that Hammer was reaping benefits directly from Knoedler's profits on the Rosales works and using that money to support a lavish lifestyle. "Are you aware of any board meetings that took place in Paris?" Crowell asked, regarding Hammer's trip there. "None that I'm aware of," Blankschen said.

There was a lunch break after Blankschen's testimony, and Hammer was supposed to testify next, followed by Freedman. The courtroom was packed in anticipation after the break. People were cramming onto the benches.

After a long wait, Gardephe's deputy walked over to the lawyers, and they all retreated to the judge's chambers. A few minutes passed and they returned. Gardephe said to the jury that, "due to some unexpected developments," he was going to do something he never does: send them home a little early. It was as if the air had been let out of the room.

The next morning, the crowd was much smaller. The lawyers once again went into the judge's chambers and then returned to the courtroom. "The case is over," Reisbaum said, with a slight shrug. "The jury's not here." She wondered aloud if it was too early to get a drink.

Freedman wouldn't be testifying under oath. The lawyers stuck around to say that all parties had settled. They wouldn't disclose the terms, but everyone—including the defendants—was, in Clarick's words, "extremely satisfied." The trial ended as Knoedler had: abruptly, with a whimper.

he office of Clarick, Crowell, and Reisbaum is in an old building in Manhattan's Flatiron District, and I visited them there a few weeks after the settlement. A slow and rickety elevator brought me to a space with lots of windows letting in light from outside. The three attorneys were giddy as we sat at a conference table. They would sometimes talk over each other excitedly, or finish each other's sentences.

"Ann Freedman tried to take advantage of the fact that in the art world there often are buyers and sellers who are anonymous," Clarick said, sitting at the head of the table. "I think she tried to take advantage of that, to let that kind of obscurity bleed into the whole process, as if that means that everything can be obscure, you know? And as if that gave her a license to believe everything that Glafira Rosales supposedly said."

I asked them what led to the decision to settle, right before Freedman's testimony.

"I think after the couple of weeks of trial," Reisbaum said, "the defendants saw what was happening, finally, I guess. And we really settled when they were ready to settle."



"What I particularly like about the timing is not that they did or didn't testify, but they settled at a point where we really told the whole story," Clarick said.

"We could have rested," Crowell said.

The next day I went to see Nikas. He works out of a towering office building on Lexington Avenue in midtown. Nikas laid out his whole case for me and explained how Freedman would have testified. (Freedman, after repeated attempts through her lawyer, never responded to a request for comment.) He refuted, one by one, the plaintiffs' so-called red flags, and claimed that the experts had previously supported the Rosales works but were trying to backtrack in order to save their reputations. He argued many of them had produced false memories.

"They clearly want to remember not believing in the Rosales works," Nikas said. "They' meaning everyone who saw them."

When I asked him about the contradictory testimonies of several experts who were listed in Freedman's letter to the De Soles as having "viewed" the Rothko, who claimed at trial not to recall having seen the work, he told me that even if the list hadn't existed, the De Soles would have bought the painting, such was their trust in Knoedler. For Nikas, the letter was ultimately superfluous. He admitted that Freedman could have asked permission from people to use their names in such a document, but argued that giving a fabricated list to collectors would have been to willfully invite trouble later on. "The list was completely unnecessary to sell paintings, period," Nikas said. "The list with misstatements on it would have been beyond foolish, given who she was dealing with. I think the list itself was used as a sword. And what we would have done in our case and in the closing is show that the existence of the list, if you use your common sense, actually shows that either Knoedler and Ann acted in good faith, or they were the worst criminals in the entire history of criminality."

I asked him why they settled, then, before doing that. He said there were four other settlements with collectors on the table. If the defense had gone forward, whether the jury ruled in their favor or not, it would have made settling the other cases impossible—they would have spent the next five years in court. He thought this settlement made another trial for Knoedler and Freedman unlikely. "This trial made it possible to have real conversations with people," Nikas said.

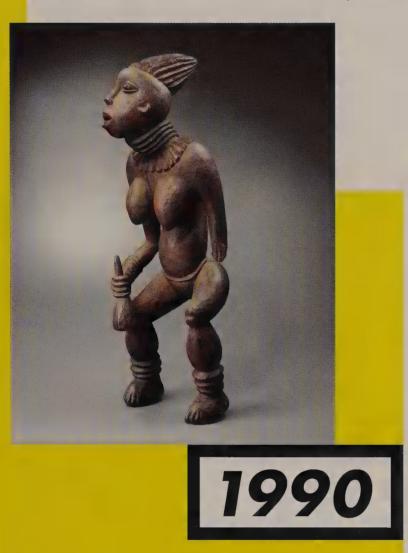
I was surprised to see several of the Rosales fakes hanging in Nikas's office, including the very first work that Rosales showed to Freedman—a Rothko—and the Pollock with the misspelled signature. Beneath the Pollock was a framed *New York Times* article with the headline, "Note to Forgers: Don't Forget the Spell Check."

"I'm just interested in the picture itself," Nikas said.

OPPOSITE Domenico and Eleanore De Sole sit behind Ann Freedman and her defense team.

M. H. Miller is deputy editor at ARTnews.

THE BANGWA QUEEN, ONE OF MANY AFRICAN ARTWORKS STOLEN BY COLONIALISTS, SELLS AT AUCTION



uring the European colonization of Africa in the 19th century, many artworks were taken from the continent and dispersed around the world. The legacy of this practice, which many now consider a crime on a massive scale, continues to define the struggle of postcolonial societies today. In recent years there have been numerous calls for the repatriation of these objects.

The Bangwa Queen

In 1990 a wooden sculpture of a voluptuous female sold at a Sotheby's auction from the African art collection of Henry A. Franklin for a record-breaking \$3.4 million. The piece, known colloquially as the Bangwa Queen, today occupies a plinth in the Musée Dapper in Paris.

The queen had resided in a royal shrine in the Bangwa grass fields of what is now Cameroon until Gustav Conrau, a German merchant and colonialist, arrived in the late 1890s. Under the pretense of exploration, Conrau entered the village seeking trade contacts and supplies. It remains unclear under exactly what circumstances Conrau acquired the sculpture, but in 1898 the Bangwa Queen arrived in Berlin.

The Benin Bronzes

Of all the colonial powers, Britain was the most industrious in their occupying mission. The British military routinely led "punitive expeditions" into occupied territories. These missions—which involved their fair share of pillaging—were purportedly a response to disobedience and morally indecent behavior. More accurately they were coups intended to facilitate local regime change and consolidate colonial power. In the process thousands of cultural artifacts were claimed as collateral.

In 1987 the British invaded the southern Nigerian territory known then as the Kingdom of Benin. Entering the royal palace, the troops came upon a collection of hundreds of brass sculptures and plaques. The British shipped some 800 of these objects to the British Museum, where they are still on display, and sold the rest to other collections across Europe.

The Benin Bronzes, as they are known, are prized for their naturalistic beauty, which demonstrates an advanced level of metalworking skill. In 2014 the grandson of one of the British looters returned two stolen pieces he had inherited to Nigeria, reviving the call for the repatriation of the others.

The Royal Gold of the Ashanti Kingdom

Africa's west coast was rich in gold. On February 4, 1874, a British expedition entered the Kumasi territory of modern-day Ghana and walked away with a number of gold objects belonging to Kofi Karikari, King of the Ashanti (Asante) people. Included in the loot were numerous ceremonial swords, a royal throne, and a trophy head that was the largest piece of goldwork from anywhere in Africa outside of Egypt.

Many of the objects, including the trophy head, were later sold at a charitable auction in London, the proceeds of which went to the families of Ashanti War victims.

The Magdala Collection and Ge'ez Manuscripts

In 1868 British forces raided the Palace of Magdala in Ethiopia (then known as Abyssinia) following the capture of a diplomat by the Emperor Tewodros II. After rescuing their comrade the troops picked up objects from Ethiopia's national archives.

Arguably the most significant theft that day was that of Ethiopian intellectual and religious heritage—in particular a series of manuscripts tracing Ethiopia's history from the time of Solomon and Sheba to the early 19th century, as well as hundreds of illustrated Ge'ez manuscripts of the Gospels, including chapters that were rejected or lost by the church, such as the book of Jubilees, the third book of Ezra, and the Apocalypse of Saint Peter. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has called for the return of all looted sacred artifacts.

-Robin Scher

ABOVE The Bangwa Queen now resides at the Musée Dapper in Paris.



SHEPARD FAIREY IS ARRESTED FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE IN DETROIT

n July 6, just two months after street artist Shepard Fairey erected a legal 184-foottall mural in downtown Detroit (commissioned by the real-estate billionaire Dan Gilbert), Fairey was arrested and hit with a felony charge stemming from the alleged vandalism of 14 different buildings and walls throughout that very same city.

Fairey was passing through customs at Los Angeles International Airport when he was detained by police after TSA officers detected an outstanding warrant. Prosecutors from Michigan's Wayne County accused Fairey of malicious destruction of property over \$1,000 and less than \$20,000, a possible ten-year jail sentence, as well as two counts of malicious destruction of a railroad bridge, both potential four-year sentences. Fairey posted a \$75,000, 10 percent bond, and was released later the same day.

As is Fairey's style, many of the street-art pieces in question were posters applied with a particularly hard-to-remove wheat-paste glue. According to one city official, even the heavy-duty graffiti removal product known as "Elephant Snot" was not enough to get one of Fairey's works from the wall. During a testimony, city worker Jessica Parker estimated that the cleanup and restoration costs amounted to over \$24,000.

Fairey has been arrested on similar charges as many as 18 times in the United States. The felony charges in Detroit, however, are more serious than most of his previous offenses. Critics have called the arrest a waste of resources and an attempt to squash street art in the city—Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan has a his-

tory of fighting against graffiti. Whatever the case, the stakes have been raised. "Sir, you may have a lot of talent, but you can't go around doing things without permission," 36th District Judge Kenneth King told Fairey at his arraignment. "You can't put things on people's property without their permission." King ruled that the case should proceed to trial. Originally slated for January 2016, the trial was—as of this writing—set for mid-April at the Wayne County Circuit Court, barring unforeseen complications or changes. The artist has pleaded not guilty.

Fairey, who is probably best known for his creation of the Obama "HOPE" poster in 2008, first gained notice for his infamous "Andre the Giant Has a Posse" guerrilla sticker campaign, which he created when he was a student at the Rhode Island School of Design. The stickers took on a meme-like life of their own, eventually morphing into the global brand Obey Giant.

Although Fairey has staged massive institutional shows and collaborated on projects with corporate heavy hitters, he has made an effort to continue some of the street-level practices for which he made his name. It's simply part of his brand. "I still do stuff on the street without permission," Fairey told the *Detroit Free Press* in May last year, in a portentous statement. "I'll be doing stuff on the street when I'm in Detroit."

-John Chiaverina

ABOVE Shepard Fairey flanked by police at the 2009 hanging of Fairey's portrait of Barack Obama at the National Portrait Gallery.

WHEN FELONIES BECOME FORM

The secret history of artists who use lawbreaking as their medium

BY ANDREW RUSSETH

NIVEAN G CONCEUR JANNE

Eva and Franca Mattes's "Stolen Pieces" series, objects taken from works by (clockwise from top left): Alberto Burri, Vasily Kandinsky, Jeff Koons, Richard Long, Gilbert & George, Joseph Beuys, Marcel Duchamp, and César.



BARRY STABL-LEVE SEM-3
LOAD RATING: 75 to 300 LBS
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rtists have long gotten away with murder, sometimes literally. After Benvenuto Cellini killed his rival, the goldsmith Pompeo de Capitaneis, in 1534, Pope Paul III—a Cellini fan—reportedly pardoned the Florentine artist, declaring that men like him "ought not to be bound by law." In 1660 the Dutch painter Jacob van Loo stabbed a wine merchant to death during a brawl in Amsterdam, and then fled to Paris. But, as the art historians Rudolf and Margot Wittkower have noted in their vigorously researched 1963 treatise on the behavior of artists, Born Under Saturn, van Loo had no problem being elected to the Royal Academy there just two years later. His reputation as an artist was what mattered.

Artists have not only indulged in criminal behavior and then been forgiven for it, by philosophers and historians, princes and popes, they have also sometimes openly advertised it. "I do not understand laws," Arthur Rimbaud wrote in 1873, summing up the attitude of the renegade artist. "I have no moral sense. I am a brute."

Those lines, as well as Pope Paul's (which Cellini shares in his autobiography), appear in Mike Kelley's 1988 installation *Pay for Your Pleasure*, a long hallway lined with painted portraits of dead white men (intellectuals, artists, and the like) paired with choice quotations from them celebrating destruction, violence, and lawbreaking. It is, viewed from one angle, an indictment of the archetype of the artist as a macho man unbound by legal codes.

The installation is always shown with an artwork by a murderer, selected based on the exhibition's location. (A painting by the serial killer turned artist John Wayne Gacy appeared in the debut.) Writing about *Pay for Your Pleasure*, Kelley wondered, "How can we safely access destructive forces?" and suggested that "criminals themselves, safely filtered through the media, serve the same function" as art. Gacy's paintings, he argued, "allow us to stare safely at the forbidden." He sets artists and criminals together, on the same level.

André Breton appears in *Pay for Your Pleasure* as well, alongside this infamous bit from his "Second Manifesto of Surrealism" of 1930: "The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd."

The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd."

This is a milestone moment: criminality explicitly proposed as a work of art.

No Surrealist ever acted on Breton's suggestion.

Nevertheless, his statement cracks open a secret history, hiding in plain sight, of artists who have not only broken laws to make their art, but have used lawbreaking itself as their medium. They have stolen artworks, robbed banks, and purchased and distributed drugs, experimenting with



crime in much the same way that their contemporaries have experimented with silk screens or video. They have explored crime's psychological effects (on both perpetrator and victim), its very definition, and its place in culture.

n 1976 the artist Ulay, then 33 and based in Berlin, drove to the Neue Nationalgalerie, stole Carl Spitzweg's *Der arme Poet* (1839)—a painting much loved by Hitler—and installed it in a local Turkish family's living room. Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein documented the action on film. The artist was arrested and faced a 36-day prison term or a 3,600 Deutsche mark fine. He fled the country. (Oddly enough, the painting was stolen again, in 1989, while on loan in Copenhagen. It has never been found.) The resulting artwork, *There Is a Criminal Touch to Art* (1976), provides a solid script for how the criminal art piece is usually created: the artist commits a crime, publicizes it (often with the aid of juicy documentation), and then, when the authorities swoop in, slips away.

This template (and this article) excludes acts of civil disobedience, like Pyotr Pavlensky's setting fire to the entrance of the FSB's headquarters in Moscow last year, or the "People's Flag Show," organized at the Judson Memorial Church in New York in 1970 to protest anti-desecration laws. The criminal artwork, by contrast, takes stranger forms, toward more diverse ends. The artist adopts the role of the trickster, complicating notions of both criminality and art. If politics are involved, they are approached obliquely, as in Ulay's work, which layered critiques about German immigration policy, latent Nazism, and cultural patrimony.

In contrast to the Ulay piece, Maurizio Cattelan's *Another Fucking Readymade* (1996) is, unsettlingly, free of any motivation beyond self-interest. Asked by the De Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam that year to create work for a group show, Cattelan responded by simply purloining a Paul de Revs show—and all of the office equipment—from the nearby Galerie Bloom and exhibiting it as his own work.

ABOVE André Breton in 1924. opposite Installation view of Maurizio Cattelan, *Another Fucking Readymade*, 1996, on view at De Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam.

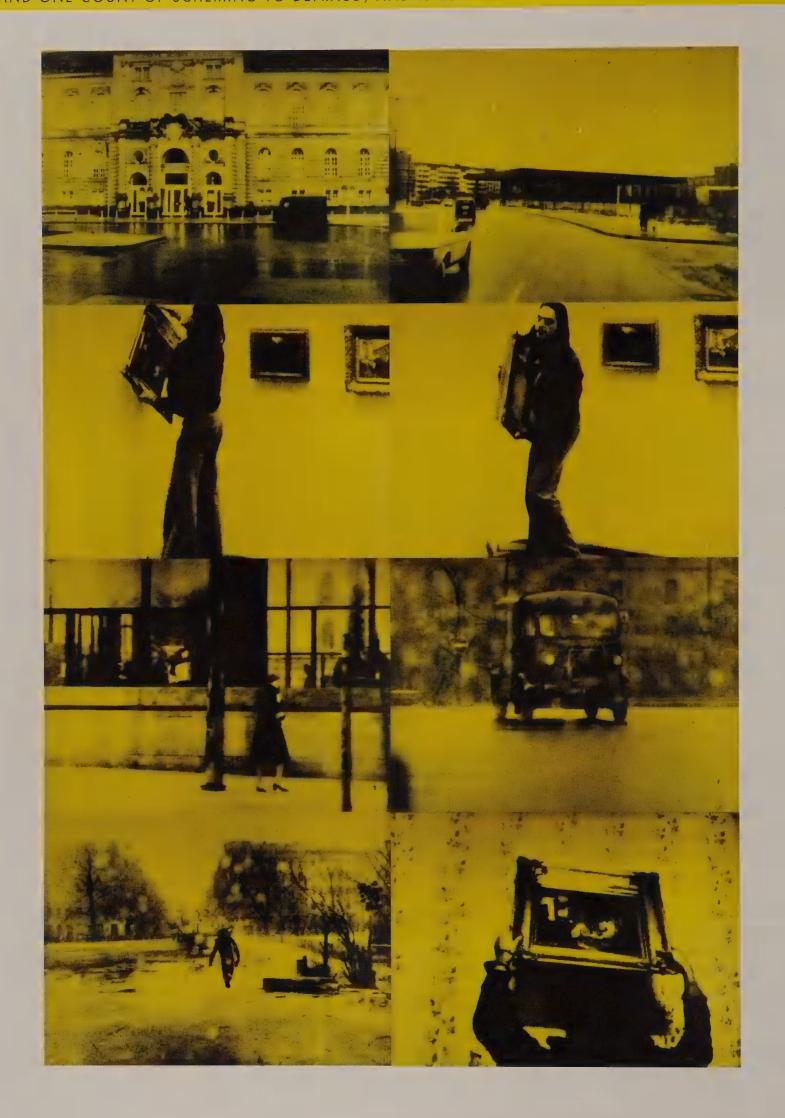


The theft was a "survival tactic," Cattelan later told curator Nancy Spector in an interview, sounding a bit like someone arrested for stealing food from a store. He had been given only two weeks to produce work for the show, he explained, but it usually takes him six months to come up with something. And so, he continued, "I took the path of least resistance. It was the quickest and easiest thing to do. Afterward, I realized that it was much more about switching one reality for another."

After some initial outrage from the proprietors of Galerie Bloom, who called the police, the Italian artist was allowed to display his work for the first few days of the show before returning it to the gallery—an outcome that nicely highlights the special dispensation artists often enjoy when committing their crimes. And for the record, yes, Cattelan's heist seems to have been suspiciously well orchestrated—an inside job, perhaps, or maybe a complete fabrication. Rumor and exaggeration are baked into many criminal artworks. (Cattelan did not respond to requests for an interview, though Galerie Bloom is on record as being mystified about how he pulled off the caper.)

Ulay and Cattelan are not outliers. Amazingly, there exists a whole subgenre of criminal pieces that involve stealing works, or parts of works, by other artists. In their brilliant book *Lifting: Theft in Art*, which accompanied a 2007 traveling show of the same name that originated at the Peacock Visual Arts Center in Abderdeen, Scotland, Gavin Morrison and Fraser Stables highlight the work of Ivan Moudov, Timm Ulrichs, and Mark Jeffrey, which also involves art thefts. (Cattelan and Ulay are explored in depth, as well, and I am indebted to the authors for their impressive research on all these artists.)

In his series "Fragments" (2002–7), Moudov presents bits of artworks he has stolen on his travels. In part, he said, the work is meant as a reaction to the lack of contemporary-art institutions in his native Bulgaria; it is an attempt to bring knowledge to his homeland. More atavistically, it is also a way for him to feel closer to the art. "I appreciate the Native American belief that when they scalp their enemies they take their power," he said. "My situation is not exactly the same but I do think that I become stronger."



If Cattelan's theft was a riposte to the overproduction demanded of contemporary artists, Moudov's project, involving the permanent alteration of artworks, represents something far more problematic. The same goes for Eva and Franco Mattes's series "Stolen Pieces" (1995–97), which eerily mirrors Moudov's work. For two years, the Matteses, then at the start of their careers, stole tiny pieces of famous and generally very expensive artworks on view in museums—a flake of paint from a Vasily Kandinsky, a label from the pedestal of a Jeff Koons sculpture, a bottle cap from an Ed Kienholz assemblage (their first job), and a fragment of a fragment chipped off of a Marcel Duchamp urinal.

Only in 2010, when the artist couple believed that the statute of limitations had expired for their crimes, did they show the purloined scraps—along with video and photographic documentation of their activities—as art. Franco told the critic Blake Gopnik that the series was "absolutely not vandalism. I thought it was the greatest tribute I could ever pay to these artists." That seems a rather disingenuous statement, but it does beg the question of what crime the Matteses had actually committed. It was theft, to be sure, but they had stolen something with almost certainly no monetary value. How do you value a chip of paint from a blue-chip painting? They had committed vandalism, but it seems unlikely in most of the cases that even the most astute conservators would have spotted the damage.

Such pieces raise all sorts of philosophical questions regarding what constitutes an artwork and what constitutes a crime. The Matteses' attention to the statute of limitations is particularly canny—some might say devious. If, after more than a decade, no one would hunt us down and prosecute us, their actions seem to argue, perhaps there was no crime at all. And that presents a frightening question: exactly how much of an artwork would they have had to steal before someone noticed?

When artworks are stolen or altered, judgments can be hazy. But other artists have made even more morally questionable choices, as Chris Burden did in his TV Hijack (1972), when, while being interviewed live on a California television station, he took the host, Phyllis Lutjeans, hostage. "Holding a knife at her throat, I threatened her life if the station stopped live transmission," he wrote later, adding that he told her he was going to make her perform obscene acts. Interviewed in 2015, Lutjeans told a California radio station that he did no such thing. "I remember him saying. 'Phyl, don't worry," she said. And anyway, she knew it was art.

Some victims of criminal artwork have not taken it so well. When the filmmaker Joe Gibbons decided to rob a bank in Providence, Rhode Island, as part of a film he was shooting, he has said, he tried at first to add some levity to the situation when he slipped a note to the teller informing her about what was going on.

OPPOSITE Hand-colored film stills from Ulay, First Act – There Is a Criminal Touch to Art (Berlin Action Series), 1976. RIGHT Joe Gibbons, Untitled (Paris Review no. 209), 2015, a drawing he made while doing time at Rikers Island, recently exhibited at Southfirst gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

"I tried to make it a funny note, something to get it on the news," Gibbons told the *New York Post* last year. "The upsetting thing there was that the teller was jolted by the note. It really upset her."

The teller in the next bank he robbed, this one in Manhattan's Chinatown, however, kept her head and slipped an exploding ink-dye packet into his bag along with the money, which totaled only about \$1,000. (Gibbons later said he thought it would make "a great souvenir" when he heard the packet go off.) Gibbons bragged about the action to incredulous friends; he believes he was apprehended because one of his former students turned him in.

In fact, the heist that led to his arrest was rather amateurishly executed and something of a farce—not least because Gibbons apparently deliberated for some time about whether to go through with it while standing outside of the bank, causing the battery to start to die on his video camera during the action. It was all of a piece for Gibbons, who has regularly toyed with alternate identities in his videos, trading one reality for another (à la Cattelan) and making it difficult for viewers to distinguish fact from fiction.

On the one hand, Gibbons has said that what got him "over the final hurdle was the desperation of not having any money and not having a place to stay, not having anything to eat." On the other, he at least claimed to have been inspired by certain radical antecedents. "I read the works of Arthur Rimbaud, who essentially believed a poet had to descend into the depths of all that was bad and report back," he told the *Post*. "This whole thing has been one long project about discovering the disenfranchised portions of society."

After spending a year in jail in New York, Gibbons is, as of this writing, out of prison but on bail awaiting trial for the Rhode Island robbery. The ultimate irony—or maybe this was part of his plan all along—is that he will not be able to benefit financially from showing video that he shot during the Manhattan holdup because New York's Son of Sam law prevents criminals from



profiting in any way from their crimes. Instead, he recently exhibited some simple, subtle drawings at the Southfirst gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. One shows his cafeteria tray at the prison on Rikers Island.

t was important that the activity include fracturing a legal code," the late Dennis Oppenheim told Morrison and Stables, when they interviewed him for their book. He was discussing Violations (1971–72), which consists of 153 hubcaps reputedly stolen from cars in California, along with a video of the artist making off with one of them. "Fracturing" is the key word: the subtitle for the piece rather gleefully lists "Evidence of 153 misdemeanors in violation of Section 484 of the California Penal Code (Petty Theft)." But Oppenheim clearly knew it would be impossible to trace the individual hubcaps back to the cars even if the authorities came into his show, to say nothing of actually convicting him of the crime.

One could divide criminal artists into two separate camps—ones that seek to tangle up and obscure issues of causality and criminality, "fracturing" it (the Matteses, Oppenheim), and those who blatantly break the law (like Gibbons and Cattelan, even if the latter would ultimately get off the hook). David Hammons falls into the second camp, embracing crime in his 1981 performance *Pissed Off*, in which he urinated on Richard Serra's soaring *T.W.U.* (1980) sculpture, then installed in Manhattan's

The heist that led to his arrest, in fact, was rather amateurishly executed and something of a farce—not least because Gibbons apparently deliberated for some time about whether to go through with it.



Tribeca neighborhood. Knowledge of the piece exists thanks to photos snapped by Dawoud Bey, which show Hammons taking a casual pee and then having what looks like a friendly exchange with a New York City police officer. (Whether or not he was arrested remains a matter of speculation.)

While *Pissed Off* has long been understood as a kind of critique of the Serra work, Hammons was also committing one of the quality-of-life offenses that have mired many minorities and lower-income city residents in the legal system (and which the de Blasio administration has sought to decriminalize). Could the work have been complete without the artist at least risking being pulled into the same system?

There are too many artworks that incorporate illegal drugs to go into here, but Rob Pruitt's *Cocaine Buffet* (1998) is of particular interest, since it throws into stark relief the very real risks taken by Hammons, an African-American man committing a crime in public. It was 1998, and for a group show at artist Jennifer Bornstein's loft, Pruitt presented a 16-foot-long line of cocaine on a mirror and invited guests to partake. Once people got snorting, it reportedly lasted for about ten minutes.

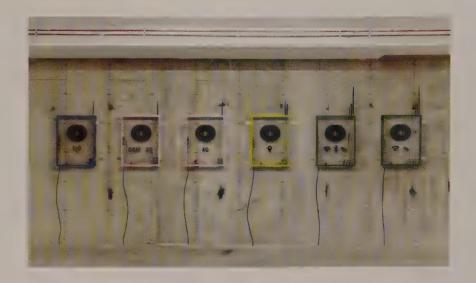
"I think that the cocaine line was also a line in the sand," Pruitt—whose career prior to the event had been at a nadir—would later muse. "People were able to see me new again." It was a work open to multiple interpretations—a potlatch; a bribe; a bit of critical participatory theater, as the viewers, the drug users, were forced to kneel down, supplicating themselves before the artist; and a perfect illustration of the insularity of the art world, which is the reading that seems most interesting here.

Judging from photos of the event, there was at least half an ounce of cocaine in that room, a felony punishable by one to nine years in prison under current New York State sentencing guidelines. (If there were four or more ounces, which seems like an outside possibility, it would have been a three-to-ten-year sentence.) Yet both artist and participants were apparently sure no authorities would be tipped off. At a time of increased penalties for drug offenders, it was a breathtaking assumption of privilege.

rime is changing with technology, and so is the criminal artwork. A whole book could be written on artists who break into networks, tweak and alter digital information, and steal legally protected material, playing with notions of copyright and privacy. But technological advances are also changing crime in more unusual ways, "fracturing" legal codes, as Oppenheim put it.

Derek Frech and Aaron Flint Jamison have each produced artworks that allow people to jam various signals—radio, cellular, and Wi-Fi, among others. Using them in many countries, including the United States, is illegal. Both artists brush up against the very edge of the law, in effect placing a loaded gun in someone's hand and letting him or her decide whether or not to use it.

OPPOSITE Rob Pruitt, Cocaine Buffet, 1998. ABOVE Installation view of "Derek Frech: Counter Measures" at Interstate Projects, 2015. Frech's work jams radio, cellular, and Wi-Fi signals



New technologies are leading to tough new questions. In 2014 the Swiss artists Carmen Weisskopf and Domagoj Smoljo, who operate under the name !Mediengruppe Bitnik (and were profiled last year in *ARTnews*), exhibited at the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen in Switzerland items that a shopping bot they had programmed randomly purchased on the darknet, the area of the Internet that traffics in illicit information and goods. Among the things acquired by the bot were ecstasy pills, which are illegal in that country.

In what can only be described as a glorious coincidence, the kunsthalle is located next to a police station. Had the artists committed a crime? asked Mike Power in the *Guardian*. Yes and no. "We are the legal owner of the drugs—we are responsible for everything the bot does, as we executed the code," Smoljo told the paper. "But our lawyer and the Swiss constitution say art in the public interest is allowed to be free."

The issues raised by Random Darknet Shopper (2014–), as the piece is titled, are no longer merely speculative. As year by year the world becomes increasingly dominated by complex, interlocking systems that are beyond the scope or expertise of any one individual, it is not hard to imagine an artwork that begins as a program or a process and then expands into other, untested legal territories. (Already works of bio-art have sparked legal action; the Critical Art Ensemble was hit with cease-and-desist letters for engineering materials that could kill Monsanto's "super crops," as Carolina Miranda has reported in these pages.) Can a work that behaves in ways that its creator did not intend still be considered an artwork, or is it something else entirely?

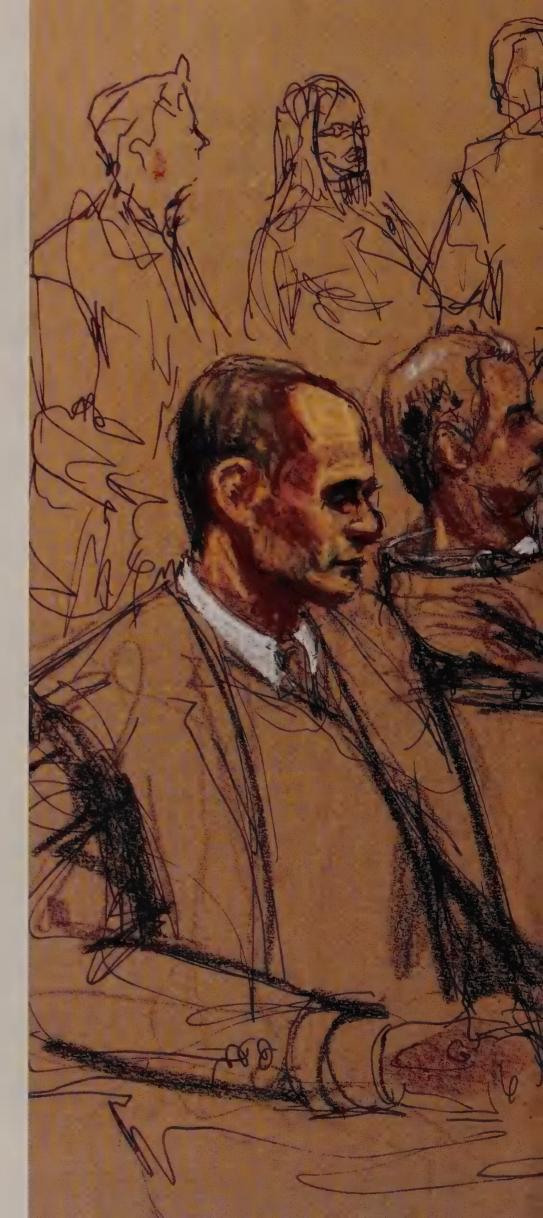
Richard Nixon's old line about executive privilege—"when the president does it, that means that it is not illegal"—proposes a tempting formulation: when an artist does it, it's not illegal. I suspect that would not satisfy artists or judges or ethicists. But this much is certain: In its most extreme manifestations, the criminal artwork places artists or viewers at risk, opening them both to the possibility of physical or emotional harm, or at the very least, the power of the state. It lays bare systems of power in ways that other art cannot, rendering them painfully visible.

Andrew Russeth is co-executive editor at ARTnews.

TRIAL IMAGE

From the red soles of Lindsay Lohan's Louboutins to Charles Manson lunging at the judge, courtroom artists capture the colors and gestures of justice

BY PHOEBE HOBAN





sually it's the legal case, not the courtroom artist, making headlines. But that wasn't Jane Rosenberg's experience when she depicted New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady during Deflategate last August. Like all courtroom illustrators plying their craft, Rosenberg was racing the clock, trying to nail the scene. The resulting sketch showed NFL commissioner Roger Goodell and an unhappylooking Brady, each flanked by his attorneys, at the hearing in federal court in lower Manhattan. There was just one wrinkle: Brady's handsome face resembled a portrait of Dorian Gray, and it instantly went viral.

Within minutes of its transmission, multiple memes of the memorable image were flooding the Internet, and Rosenberg was fielding calls from all the major news networks and talk shows, including *Good Morning America* and *The Tonight Show*. Within days, Brady's image was being reproduced on T-shirts, mugs, and even cookies. "Everybody called me. There was not a single station that didn't request my presence," said Rosenberg. "Lots of people wanted to buy the sketch or have me donate it to charity. The bakery said they would pay me royalties, but I just asked for cookies, and I still have some in my freezer."

Such an extreme reaction is an anomaly, but courtroom art as a genre has always been full of drama. While the court functions as the illustrators' studio, it is first and foremost a stage, one whose players range from the witness to the defendant to the prosecutor to the judge and jury. No wonder caricaturists like Daumier had a field day depicting the court scenes of their time. The advent of photography in the mid-1800s greatly diminished the need for courtroom art. But that changed again in 1935, when the Charles Lindbergh kidnapping case, in which the aviator's 20-month-old son was abducted, became such a media circus that news cameras were banned from courtrooms. To this day, they are not allowed in federal court, although they are permitted in most state courts. Courtroom art was in its heyday from the mid-'30s until 1988, when cameras invaded the court again for the Howard Beach case, which involved a white mob attacking three black men in Queens, New York. One was killed by a car while trying to escape.

The O. J. Simpson case in 1994 once again brought courtroom cameras under fire, creating a second mini-boom for courtroom illustrators, with media outlets usually employing one regular artist. Since then, the proliferation of cable television, the advent of the Internet, and the waning economy have combined to greatly shrink the market for courtroom art. "We used to cover cases gavel to gavel," said Christine Cornell, who has been sketching trials since 1975. "Now people are only interested in highlights. It's just a few trials that get daily coverage. Nobody wants to invest that kind of money."

ewer artists are covering fewer courts—in Los Angeles, for instance, Bill Robles and Mona Shafer Edwards have the field pretty much to themselves. But the drama of cases in a celebrity- and social media–obsessed world continues to generate fascinating cultural fodder, with courtroom



artists providing the best (and sometimes the only) close-up view, whether it is Edwards zooming in on the red status soles of Lindsay Lohan's Christian Louboutin shoes during her 2010 probation trial, or Elizabeth Williams focusing on the famous fake Rothko canvas just after the Knoedler fraud trial was settled in January, a luminous red rectangle way off to one side of the courtroom, yet still the center of the action. Even in the age of Instagram, courtroom art is a compelling genre.

Besides a mastery of the basic skills—the ability to capture a scene or likeness on deadline—the artists each have their own approach. But for all of them, the first priority on entering the courtroom is simple: not guessing who is innocent or guilty, but getting the best seat in the house. "My goal is to be there as early as possible. The first artist gets the best seat," said Rosenberg, who draws with pastel and uses a luggage rack as an ad-hoc easel.

Since 1980 Rosenberg has covered trials ranging from the case of model Marla Hanson, whose face was viciously slashed in 1986, to that of the "Cannibal Cop," former New York Police Department officer Gilberto Valle, whose online fantasies of abducting, torturing, killing, and eating women earned him his gruesome nickname in 2013.

"I want to get the best angle on the person most important to the story," Rosenberg said. But even so, a good angle is never guaranteed. "The Bill Cosby sexual-assault hearing in February was a nightmare. There was a giant monitor in front of the witness, and I was trapped in a seat blocked by it. I could barely catch a glimpse of his profile"—or for that matter, of the star himself. Later in the day, Rosenberg jockeyed for a better position and produced a taut sketch of Cosby, seated between his attorneys.

PREVIOUS SPREAD Jane Rosenberg shows reporters waiting for a verdict at the "Cannibal Cop" trial in a N.Y. federal courthouse, 2013. Above Marilyn Church's illustration of David Berkowitz, the Son of Sam, being restrained in court in 1977. Opposite Elizabeth Williams's depiction of Bernie Madoff being taken away by federal marshal on March 12, 2009.

"They showed all these horrible torture pictures—naked women roasted on pits. It was really crazy, but it was exciting to draw nudes instead of people in suits."

The obstructed view is even more of an issue in a drama-filled case like that of the Boston Marathon bomber, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, which Rosenberg covered every day for three months last spring. "It was a hard place to sketch. I was right behind the defendant, with a row of lawyers in front of me. All I could see was a blurry head the size of a pin. Every time he walked in and out of the courtroom, I desperately waited for that moment to catch a glimpse of his face from the front. It was very dramatic, a lot of people with missing limbs and pictures of injuries. The lawyers were also holding up guns, and they showed the pressure-cooker bomb and other weapons, and even unfurled a giant ISIS flag in the courtroom."

Courtroom scenes range from the horrific to the humorous. "In the Cannibal Cop trial," Rosenberg said, "they showed all these horrible torture pictures—naked women roasted on pits. It was really crazy, but it was exciting to draw nudes instead of people in suits. I recently covered a trial about a guy selling fake vintage wine. It was a treat to draw wine bottles, and to be a real artist and do a still life. But usually it's: give a splash headline, and that's it. They don't want the meat and the details."

lizabeth Williams is coauthor of the book *The Illustrated Courtroom:* 50 Years of Courtroom Art. She began her courtroom career in 1980, and works with a brush pen, oil pastel, and oil paint sticks. "You want to frame the scene so that it is journalistically correct," she explained. "You are the replacement for the camera, that's your job. When you see one of my drawings you should hopefully get a sense that you were sitting where I was sitting."

Honing a news sense is also a necessity, and artists develop an eagle eye for each case's key moment. "In the [Bernie] Madoff trial it was him going to prison in handcuffs," Williams said. "Most of the time white-collar criminals are not remanded after they plead guilty. But when the marshal slapped those handcuffs on him, I knew





that was extremely newsworthy. In the Knoedler case it was when [collector Domenico] De Sole was on the stand with his Rothko. They brought out the painting, and it was him and this picture. It was like 'Oh my God. That's the shot.' And then he looked at it, he pointed at it, and I thought, 'Oh my God, there it is.' It was a dramatic scene, and it kind of told the whole story of this man and this picture that he had bought for \$8 million and it's a fake."

Another memorable moment occurred during the trial of Sean Bell, the black man shot to death by police in 2006. "The really interesting scene that I loved," said Williams, "was when Detective Gescard Isnora, who shot Bell and Sean Bell's friend Joseph Guzman [who was shot eleven times], was identified by Guzman when he was being cross-examined by Anthony Riccio. There was a moment when Riccio said to his client, 'Isnora stand up,' and he was pointing at Guzman and asking him, 'Is this the man who you saw?' It was just such a dramatic moment! The defendant is standing, the lawyer is pointing and gesticulating and the witness is angry and upset, and you can see the judge's face tense up and it was like, 'Wow this is the moment. This is what it is all about."

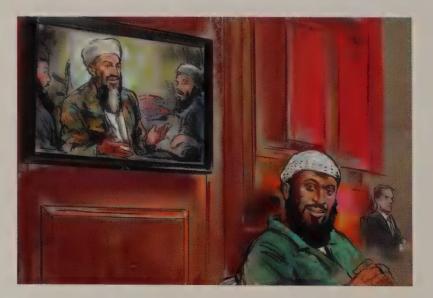
The central question of innocence or guilt is not one that the courtroom artist contemplates—at least not professionally. "We are always so curious about what the jury's going to do. We were sitting in the cafeteria waiting for the jury to finish deliberating in the John Delorean [1983 drug smuggling] case and it was almost like we were a jury ourselves," said Williams.

Still, sometimes something apparently editorial inadvertently slips into a sketch, whether it is a terrorist's evil demeanor or a famous mobster's jaunty attitude. Marilyn Church, coauthor of the book *The Art of Justice*, has covered trials since 1974, and was almost immediately hired by the *New York Times*. In order to quickly fill big flat areas, she uses water-soluble Caran d'Ache crayons and colored pencils. "The challenge is to anticipate what is going to happen. You don't know if someone is going to jump up or collapse in tears," she said. "You always have to be ready to make changes. I find courts so exciting and thrilling. I am looking to absorb the energy and to get it down, the confrontation and the drama."

Church has seen plenty of it, from one of her first trials, the 1976 right-to-die case of Karen Quinlan (a young woman in a vegetative state whose parents sued to have her disconnected from life support), to 1980's headmistress-murderess Jean Harris—"the way she dressed, Chanel suits, the perfect little low shoes, so proper"—to the harrowing, and ultimately controversial, 1989 case of the Central Park jogger, who was allegedly attacked by a group of black teenagers. Some court spectators were so angry when that verdict was read that they brandished a banner in front of the judge, reading, "We know where you live." That and the judge's furious reaction—and bulging eyes—were aptly caught by Church. "I will not be intimidated and I will not allow a miscarriage of justice," the judge thundered. "What a moment that was," Church recalled. "It was so frightening that they had the nerve to bring that into court."

But nothing was quite as frightening as her experience in 1977, during the Son of Sam case. Church and a few other artists were permitted to draw serial killer David Berkowitz in lockdown at the Kings County Hospital psychiatric ward. "I was sitting within three feet of him. I was terrified because, as a young woman with long dark hair, I did resemble his victims. I just froze looking at him. He had kind of ethereal spaced-out eyes that were piercing. It was one of the few times it really got to me. The Robert Chambers trial [in 1986] was another, because those two trials were about young women, and Chambers was this teenage boy, about the age of my teenage boy, accused of murder, and his parents were there every day. I loved drawing his flesh in pale color. He was so colorless, this big handsome guy, so arrogant and showing no remorse."

Church was also called into WABC-TV on December 8, 1980, the night of John Lennon's murder, and asked to re-create the scene of the unforgettable crime that had occurred in front of New York's fabled Dakota building—entirely from verbal descriptions. The sketches won an Emmy. "I did four drawings in the space of about two hours at the television station." She later covered Mark David Chapman's trial and drew him in court. "I felt a terrible anger; he was so pathetic and so needy of attention. It was revolting looking at him because of what he did. It's hard to keep down your reaction sometimes."





ourtroom artists strive to remain accurate and objective, much to their subjects' discomfort. "John Gotti was very taken with himself and his appearance—always dressed in flashy suits," Church said. "He also knew who the artists were. One day I was looking through binoculars and drawing him, and he looked at me and pointed to his neck and made a 'no, no' motion to indicate he was watching me and I shouldn't make his neck jowly." During the 1994 World Trade Center bombing case, the lawyer of the defendant, Mohammed Salameh, came over to the whole group of artists and said, "My client does not want you to draw him looking like a terrorist."

Sometimes the challenges go beyond capturing the scene that plays out in the courtroom; occasionally the artists are forced to draw from memory. When there is a grand jury, for instance, the key players can only be caught entering or leaving the courtroom.

OPPOSITE (top) Bill Robles's depiction of Charles Manson lunging at the judge on October 5, 1970. OPPOSITE (bottom) William Hennessy's illustration of the penalty phase of the Zacarias Moussaoui trial on March 7, 2006. ABOVE Sketch by Aggie Kenny of the Larry Layton hearing in Guyana, 1979.

But few illustrators have had to reconstruct an entire trial from memory, as Aggie Kenny did during the Jim Jones cult suicide case in Guyana in 1979. "I was sent by ABC news to Jonestown and put up in a hotel for a number of days," Kenny said. "We immediately found out we were not allowed to draw in the courtroom, and that presented an ultimate challenge. They let us sit there and observe, but I couldn't even take notes."

Another case that provided a unique challenge was that of Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff, in 2009, in which about a dozen witnesses stood up and delivered five-minute impact statements, one after another, making it hard, if not impossible, to know who was going to stand up when. "It was difficult to be journalistically correct," explained Kenny. "With all those victims you have to choose one and it's hard to know which, so you just do the best you can."

Court artist Christine Cornell solved that visual problem by showing all the victims standing, with the one weeping victim she had chosen to focus on shown more prominently than the others, which earned some approbation. "You could only see them when they were standing, not sitting," Cornell said. "It was an extraordinary circumstance. I think what I did was a creative way of



The challenge is to anticipate what is going to happen.
You don't know if someone is going to jump up or collapse in tears."

solving a difficult problem; it was not meant to give the impression they were all standing simultaneously." After that trial, the Associated Press issued guidelines requiring artists to show each scene at just a single moment, rather than condensing the action.

Cornell, who since 1975 has covered most of the big New York—area cases, is attuned to telltale gestures and moments. "You are thinking about the story, what visual elements you want that will tell the story best." During the 1987 Tawana Brawley case, for instance, in which a 15-year-old black girl accused six white men of raping her, Cornell observed Reverend Al Sharpton testifying. "One of his wonderful little ways of expressing himself was to roll his eyes to the heavens when he was asked a question, as if he were kind of searching for an answer. Which is a nicer way of saying he



was lying, or at least hedging his bets," she said. "That wasn't going to be the only drawing of the day, but I really wanted to get it."

Sometimes the signature details are objects, not gestures. "Imelda Marcos always wore black and carried a rosary," Cornell recalled. "Gotti used to rotate his hand so that his pinky ring was uppermost, and bring his fist down in a very magisterial gesture. You always look for that kind of stuff. Talk about props: Vinny the Chin came in a wheelchair, but if you stared at him through binoculars, you could see that he was not out of it, he was very alert, it was an act. In the Cannibal Cop case, all those pictures of those women on spits with strategically placed carrots and apples in their mouths—that was pretty horrific and creepy."

t doesn't get much creepier than the legendary trial at which Los Angeles—based artist Bill Robles got his start in 1970: that of cult leader Charles Manson. Robles's drawing for CBS of Manson lunging at the judge, with a bailiff grabbing Manson mid-air around the waist, is perhaps one of the 20th century's best-known courtroom images. "It led the news that night on Cronkite," Robles said. "It's still the biggest and longest trial I covered. I was there every day for nine and a half months. Manson went through phases. He started with a full beard and head of hair and gradually went into a '50s look and a goatee and then to a shaved head with a swastika carved into his forehead—as did the girls. I had never been in a courtroom before, and I was thrust in with media from New York. It was quite a baptism."

Over the months, Robles drew everything from the pathology charts of the victims' wounds, explained by the famous L.A. coroner Thomas Noguchi, to Manson when he briefly appeared on the witness stand. "He had what we called a 'Manson stare.' He would gaze at the media and pick a certain press person and stare at them. One time I had my markers in a shaving kit on the railing and I inadvertently knocked them over onto the hardwood floor, and it made horrific noise in this quiet courtroom. Manson looked at me as if to say, 'Shame on you.' I don't know how he used to communicate with some of the girls, who had also shaved their heads, but they would sometimes stand up and say 'Heil Hitler.' As an illustrator, you have to freeze that moment."

When Robles covered the Patty Hearst trial, he caught the fraught moment when the kidnapped heiress's father, newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst, represented by high-profile attorney F. Lee Bailey, signed the \$1.5 million bail check. Robles also covered both O. J. Simpson trials. "It was a media circus. I went in for CBS news, because they televised that trial. They started losing jurors, and I was going in there to do the alternates, and you were supposed to draw the jurors without faces. I did a whole jury with alternates, and when the trial judge saw it, I got subpoenaed. Even though I had shown them without faces, Judge Ito thought they were too recognizable." After that, artists had to get a seal of approval in the press office, "Judge Ito approved."

Like everyone else in the nation, Robles "was caught up in the whole drama from day one with the car chase. I remember drawing Ron Goldman's father. He was crying on the witness



stand, a very handsome man, easy to draw. I was astonished that O. J. was seated so close to the Goldmans. He was arrogant, the way he talked to the press. I saw him arraigned for the murder and I couldn't believe how big he was. He must have just manipulated these people like dolls."

But Robles's most difficult trial was that of Michael Jackson in his 2005 molestation case. "You would start at 8:30 and get three 15-minute breaks during the day. I was on a starvation diet for four and a half months. I just had time for pizza from the media trucks. I had to produce two drawings for every break. It was grueling. But it was my most lucrative trial. I had a front-row seat, the best seat in the house. It was a huge challenge. There were media from all over the world. They wanted all they could get. There were no cameras allowed in the court, so they could only shoot Jackson when he was coming and going. And they had to have images."

Robles humorously caught the trial's endless grind in what became a double-spread: the jurors at the beginning of the trial "diligently taking notes," and then at the end of the trial, "bored stiff, with their feet up on the rails, totally nonchalant." He also met Jackson, who had one of his lawyers ask if he could meet the illustrator. "I showed him a drawing he had seen on TV and he lit up like a candle. He was very gentle."

ecently Robles has been covering the trial of Enrique Marquez, who was accused of providing rifles to the San Bernardino terrorists. "I can't believe how young he is," Robles said. "He's a very calm, handcuffed, chubby guy with a baby face. It's always exciting to see them come in with chains on their legs and handcuffed. It is stimulating as an art image. I've had a few other stereotypical ISIS guys with big black beards. That's always exciting. Not run of the mill."

As a Washington, D.C.—based courtroom journalist, William Hennessy has covered cases ranging from Bill Clinton's impeachment to Mayor Marion Barry's drug trial to the trial of the 20th hijacker in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "You always have to be prepared for something unexpected. Yesterday, during a simple bond review, one of the defendants fainted. Thank you." But covering high-stakes political trials also involves some tricks of the trade. "When Hillary was called in to testify to the grand jury during Whitewater, we were all there outside the courtroom to sketch her arrival," Hennessy said. "But they took her up a back elevator, and we never saw her. A month later, when Monica Lewinsky was tied into the Whitewater investigation and I heard Monica was going to testify, I remembered that and was able to catch her as she got into that same elevator."

The trial of Zacarias Moussaoui, the 20th hijacker, was "sort of a torturous, slow-motion process. Numerous, very gruesome videos were shown, and all the while, he smiled and clapped and nodded his head and routinely shouted out 'Death to America' and 'Praise Osama Bin Laden' every time he left the courtroom. It was amazing to me that the court security remained as calm as they did. It so easily could have gotten into a physical situation. He had already pleaded guilty; the trial was to determine whether he would get the death penalty. Evidence from victims justified the death sentence. It was stressful and emotional to the point of playing computerized images of the plane crashing in the field, complete with audio, and he's sitting there smirking. It was gut-wrenching. At one point he asked to see my drawings. I didn't show them to him."

Interestingly, there seems to be an East Coast school and a West Coast school of courtroom art. The L.A.-based illustrators tend to create much sketchier images. Even Robles's famous Manson lunge is an exciting blur of motion rather than a minutely detailed drawing. The same can be said of Mona Shafer Edwards's work. Edwards, who began her courtroom career in 1985, got her start as a fashion illustrator, and it shows in the style of her pen-and-marker drawings. "The most important thing to me is to get the emotion and the movement and a real human quality and fluidity to the art and composition," Shafer said. My work isn't based around interior or architectural elements. I am interested in body language, expression, dynamics. It's very different from the East Coast artists. I pretty much ignore the flag or state seal. I don't care what the courtroom looks like. I want to know what is going on in court."

By contrast, the work of New York-based Rosenberg, Church, Williams, Kenny, and Cornell is more fully executed, including the courtroom's often atmospheric interior. But whether they are creating loose impressions or much more detailed studies, the courtroom artists themselves are key witnesses to a unique and important history.

opposite Christine Cornell, a scene from the General Westmoreland CBS libel trial, in 1982. Above Mona Shafer Edwards's sketch of Lindsay Lohan in court.



Installation view of the Whitney Museum's fifth-floor galleries, where Andrea Fraser's multichannel audio piece Down the River, 2016, was exhibited.

AROUND NEW YORK

he art that had New York talking this past spring was barely there—shows comprised of empty, or nearly empty, spaces charged with anxious energies: the cacophony of a prison, the voices of art dealers, the movement of balloons, the smell of bacon.

Andrea Fraser led the way. For a little over two weeks, Fraser took over the fifth floor of the Whitney Museum as part of "Open Plan," a series of solo shows in the largest column-free museum exhibition space in New York. Light streamed through floor-to-ceiling windows at each end of the airy gallery as audio that the artist recorded inside Sing Sing prison in Ossining, New York, played from speakers mounted on the ceiling; men talked, shouted, and screamed, metal clanged, and birds chirped.

Titled *Down the River* (2016), the work was brutal and efficient, splicing together examples of institutions that have exponentially

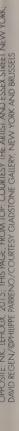
expanded over the past half-century: one focused on control and punishment, the other on learning, pleasure, and leisure; one whose population is disproportionately of color, the other whose patrons are largely white; one hidden away from society, the other dead center. It turned the museum into a site of psychological turmoil, as horror mingled with tranquility.

Few artists today are working as incisively as Fraser, who has, from the beginning of her career, bravely addressed inequality in all its forms—racial, social, gender, and (in her searing essay for the 2012 Whitney Biennial) economic. She has done so in the full knowledge of art's tendency to reduce politics to feel-good back-patting. Acknowledging the pitfalls, Fraser raises the stakes. In an interview in the *New York Times*, she admitted of her show, "I am not sure that on some level it isn't an absolutely monstrous thing to do." She shouldn't worry. After some time with

the piece it was all other art that seemed monstrous.

A smaller but no less antagonistic void was on offer at Essex Street gallery, which was empty save for four speakers that played a four-hour-long loop of the gallery's owner, Maxwell Graham, and his colleague, Neal Curley, reading from Abigail Bray's hard-hitting 2013 manifesto, Misogyny Re-loaded. This was the work of Bea Schlingelhoff, who paid the two art dealers \$50 an hour to make the recording (\$875 total), which was not for sale.

The business deal, on its own terms, was a commendably taut conceptual maneuver—a reversal of power, if you will, or a reeducation session, with the artist using the dealer quite literally—but for anyone lucky enough to know Graham, it was also a subtly humorous one. One of the more charming and voluble art types in the city, he was required to listen to the sound of his own voice for hours each day, intoning about







тор Installation view of Bea Schlingelhoff's *The Art Dealer Reads Misogyny Re-loaded*, 2016. Essex Street. воттом Philippe Parreno, *Mont Analogue*, 2001, archival color, silent digital betacam, and DVD, 62 minutes, installation view. Gladstone.

radical feminism. How, one wonders, has that experience affected him?

The lights were dim at the Artist's Institute, freshly relocated from its dilapidated Lower East Side storefront to the ground floor of a stately Upper East Side

manse, and ghosts seemed to be lingering in the darkness. The occasion was "One Man Show: Holly, Candy, Bobbie and the Rest," curated by Hilton Als as part of a full season devoted to the polymath's work. With works scattered about, it felt

a bit like the ramshackle back room of a downtown club. It was an impressionistic look at the glories of the New York underground of the 1970s and '80s and its drag/ trans denizens-Holly Woodlawn, Candy Darling, and more—through photographs by Richard Avedon, Fred McDarrah, and others. There were also works by Als himself, an erstwhile artist, one an installation with a black velvet rope and a slide show of black-and-white party images shot by Bill Bernstein in 1979 at the gay hangout GG's Barnum Room. Altogether the exhibition amounted to a wonderfully strange celebration of difference, and of histories that must be remembered.

Uptown, Philippe Parreno—a master of the void—turned Gladstone Gallery's relatively new space in the Edward Durell Stone House (the most beautiful commercial gallery in Manhattan, in my opinion) into an otherworldly aquarium for his show "If This Then Else." Exotically colored, larger-than-life balloon fish, filled with just the right amount of helium, glided around the space, ascending as they passed over air vents. Lights faded on and off as a sonar-like bell clanged repeatedly. It felt like being deep in the ocean—a bewitching out-of-body experience achieved with the lightest of touches.

Parreno's concurrent show at Gladstone's West 21st Street space was something of a letdown in comparison, despite being a grand production. Upstairs, a projector cycled through bright-colored lights in an empty room, using Morse code to translate the René Daumal novel Mont Analogue into an epilepsy-inducing display. The installation downstairs was dominated by Li-Yan (2016), a 16-minute video featuring stunning shots of New York City parks at night, populated by a grazing cow, a woman walking, and paper lanterns (or are they spaceships?) flying into the air. It was all darkly mystical and phantasmagoric until you realized the work wasn't going anywhere. Pretty soon, lights above and behind the screen burst on and ran through a sequence, and the video started again. The effect was of a formidable intelligence swimming slowly by, far away, unaware that you are even there. Reading the press



Urs Fischer, "Misunderstandings in the Quest for the Universal," 2016, installation view. Gagosian.

release and learning that a "bioreactor" at 64th Street was controlling aspects of both shows deepened that feeling.

Stepping into an otherwise empty hallway on the fifth floor of Gagosian's Madison Avenue fortress, I was hit with the unmistakable scent of bacon cooking. It was being microwaved regularly as part of Urs Fischer's show "Misunderstandings in the Quest for the Universal." If you had told me that the wily Darren Bader, Fischer's onetime assistant and a great innovator of the readymade, was behind the show, I would have believed you, but the microwave with bacon was not an actual work. Fischer just wanted the smell, which paired nicely with a digitally sliced-anddiced image, printed on shaped aluminum, of two grinning cartoon pigs.

Fischer increasingly seems intent on finding the limits of what can be pulled from the computer and rendered physical. His results are impressive, if obscure. A case in point: the wallpaper printed with ultra-realistic dashes and dabs of paint, as if Michael Krebber (or a precocious child) had gone wild. With the exception of a black-and-white wall (produced with a flip of the digital switch), the paper was

so gloriously frenetic that it was tricky to spot the pigs and other, similarly fractured cartoon figures on view—a void achieved through overload. Fischer's market success and slickness have earned him detractors, but when he is in his zone, as he was here, he is one of the best we have—a madcap rococo maestro charting the contemporary and very slippery analog-digital divide.

Cameron Rowland's objects, on the other hand, are brutally straightforward (rococo only in their ingenious conceptual underpinnings), as is his message: slavery continues in the United States. For his show at Artists Space, Rowland registered the nonprofit as number 91020000 (the exhibition's title) with Corcraft, the industrial division of the New York State Department of Corrections that sells goods produced by convicts paid \$0.10 to \$1.14 an hour. A few of these products-manhole levelers, an office desk, and firefighters' jackets (red-orange for prisoners, yellow for non-prisoners)—were scattered around the largely empty gallery. An explanatory text transformed them into gutpunch sculptures, pathos-filled updates on the readymade that changed the way one looks at objects, and the way one thinks about how they came into being, and how they are used. Institutional critique has long felt like the project and province of an aging generation, but Rowland, not yet 30, has positioned himself as a natural heir to Hans Haacke, Michael Asher, and yes, Andrea Fraser.

WHEN IT COMES to working with readymade materials, B. Wurtz has few rivals. Wurtz endows mass-produced items (plastic bags, tin cans, shoelaces) with noble aesthetic import, doing for dollar-store finds what Robert Irwin has done for light and shadows. Mid-renovation on its Chelsea headquarters, Metro Pictures offered a selection of his sculptures at 83 Pitt Street on the Lower East Side, though even just one can break your heart—say, the block of wood balancing on four door springs that bears on its top, screwed in, both parts of a latch lock, never to meet; or the trophy-like tower of wood blocks adorned with a tall yellow sock. The pièce de résistance was a soaring tree-like sculpture from 1993 balanced on five legs, blooming translucent blue plastic bags. It rivals Jeff Koons's flower sculptures in the sheer-joy department, while trading out pathological



Lena Henke, split, 2016, clay, glaze, and plastic, 18" x 17" x 8", installation view. Real Fine Arts.

opulence for dazzling ingenuity and wit.

Wurtz's was only one of a number of recent displays that presented assertive, deliberately formed sculpture, much of which had a tough, ready-to-throw-down elegance. One can mention Valerie Keane's wicked, sharp-edged, cut-and-hung Perspex pieces at Lomex; Jared Madere's sprawling, shamanistic arrangement of tinsel, salt, and flowers on the floor of

David Lewis's booth at Independent art fair; Jessi Reaves's stone-age chairs made of cut-and-bound foam at Sculpture-Center; and Jeanette Mundt's stunning paintings at Off Vendome of, among other subjects, a nude, kneeling woman and a jaw-dropping mountain scene on thick shaped panels, some attached to the wall or the odd love seat via metal piping—they're Ferdinand Hodler and Henri de

Toulouse-Lautrec meets Cady Noland, and they're great.

Lena Henke's typically winning outing at Real Fine Arts, "Heartbreak Highway," presented impressive new ceramics: horse hooves with a traffic light or a car sprouting from their tops, sometimes holding plastic milk cartons. (This sounds impossible, I know, but consult the photos.) She showed these hybrid forms on rickety handmade lazy Susans (an idea that begs to be copied), in a spare arrangement that included gates and referred to everything from garden architecture to the victims (human and architectural) of Robert Moses, he of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, which rumbles past the gallery. There is simply too much to say here, so I'll just say this: Henke has established herself as the rare artist who can shift, seemingly effortlessly, from one idea to another and another. Her series are disparate in form but united by a roughand-tumble way with materials and deep engagement with the city's hidden histories.

Haegue Yang's daring show at Greene Naftali, "Quasi-Pagan Minimal," included her trademark fluorescent-lit venetianblind arrays, psychedelic wall works based on the security patterns found in envelopes, and bulbous sculptures made from intricately woven straw that resembled alien life forms. With spareness and grit the order of the day, Yang's work supplied some welcome effervescence.

Finally, Sarah Braman: her focus, like Wurtz's, is squarely on the stuff of everyday life, on how things are used, stored, and shared, she is also a perceptive observer of America's collective psyche. For her second show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, "You Are Everything," Braman continued steadily down the fertile path she has cleared, combining wooden boxes and Plexiglas sheets in majestic shades of purple and orange with found objects—this time, the back of an old but pretty-well-cared-for white Toyota Celica, the frame of a bunk bed, and some beat-up chairs—to create a warm, hippie-inflected variant of Post-Minimalism that is alive to bodies and aware of time. Some works even featured comfy seating, making them refuges from the ravages outside. "Take a load off and relax," Braman seemed to offer, kindly, to an exhausted nation. ANDREW RUSSETH



Nam June Paik, Internet Dream, 1994, video sculpture, 113" x 149%" x 31 1/2".

"ELECTRONIC SUPERHIGHWAY"

WHITECHAPEL GALLERY, LONDON
JANUARY 29-MAY 15

In 1974 Korean-American artist Nam June Paik predicted, "Video-telephones, fax machines, interactive two-way television...and many other variations of this kind of technology are going to turn the television set into an [expanded-media] telephone system with thousands of novel uses, not only to serve our daily needs, but to enrich the quality of life itself."

The optimism that Paik and his peers felt about new technology in the late '60s and early '70s seems quaint today. Artists in the 21st century are much more ambivalent about the dizzying tech developments of recent years, which have connected individuals and communities around the globe but also ushered in a new age of surveillance.

This dichotomy was reflected in the land-mark exhibition "Electronic Superhighway (2016–1966)" at London's Whitechapel

Gallery. The ambitious show charted 50 years of artists' engagement with new technologies through some 100 artworks.

Having long ignored the phenomenon of digital art, many institutions have recently sought to play catch-up, as witnessed by the rash of recent exhibitions in America, Asia, and Europe about art and technology. What made "Electronic Superhighway" different was its effort to situate the phenomenon within a historical lineage.

Taking its title from a phrase coined by Paik, "Electronic Superhighway" wound back in time from slick post-Internet art incorporating chat rooms, holograms, and video diaries through early interactive works to the boundary-pushing 1966 Experiments in Art and Technology, or E.A.T., that paired artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, and Yvonne

Rainer with Bell Laboratories engineers.

The curators argued convincingly that E.A.T.'s marrying of then-novel equipment such as video recorders, projectors, and infrared cameras with live performance, dance, and music made it an important precursor to the mixing of disciplines commonplace in art today. This thesis provided something of a through line for the show, a sprawling, euphoric cacophony of artworks across mediums, not unlike the audio-visual bombardment of information we experience daily from television, advertising, and the Internet.

THAT THE DIGITAL revolution has profoundly changed society and social behavior (and perhaps even rewired our brains) was one of several recurring themes. Myriad works of Internet and post-Internet art in the exhibition critiqued our tech-dependent lifestyle,



Amalia Ulman, Excellences & Perfections (Instagram Update, 18th June 2014), 2015, C-type print dry mounted on aluminum, mounted on black edge frame, 491/4" x 491/4" x 13/8".

in which online interactions become a substitute for real intimacy and memes replace complex experiences and ideas.

At the entrance the visitor was confronted by Olaf Breuning's *Text Butt* (2015), a gigantic photo of a naked bottom spouting texts in a literalization of the term "talking out of one's ass." One may presume this is critical of the meaninglessness of most of our digital communication, although with Breuning, one can never be quite sure.

Amalia Ulman, on the other hand, investigated the increasingly hazy boundaries between public and private life in her project *Excellences & Perfections* (2014). In a performance lasting several months, Ulman created a semi-fictional persona, posting manipulated images of herself on Instagram and responding to viewers' demands that she turn herself into a "hot babe."

Yet other works celebrated the upsides of digital technologies: the access to informa-

tion and the ability to connect with others. Camille Henrot's bewitching video installation *Grosse Fatigue* (2013) mirrors the nonlinear, fragmentary way we absorb and order information from the Internet. It offers a kaleidoscopic narrative of the universe's creation through a montage of photography, illustration, music, spoken-word poetry, film, and computer-screen pop-ups.

Ryan Trecartin exploits the visual language of reality television in his manic video A Family Finds Entertainment (2004) to paint an anarchic, gender-bending portrait of a media-saturated generation. Liberated from social and cinematic conventions, the work embodies a sense of excitement around the possibilities of technology that is also evident in pieces from decades past.

One such, Roy Ascott's La Plissure du Texte (1983), linked other tech-minded artists around the world in a computer version of Exquisite Corpse, the game beloved

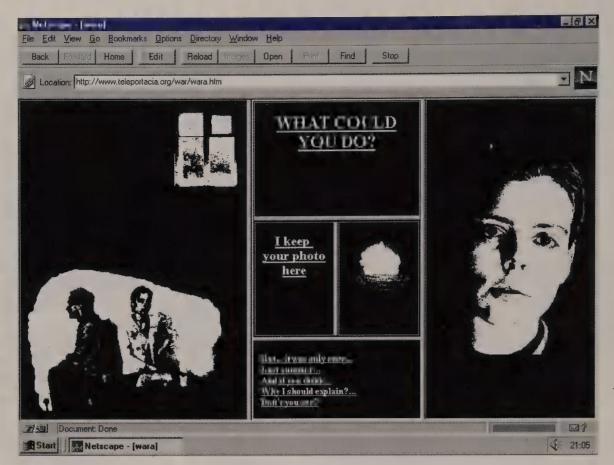
of the Surrealists in which each player sketches part of a body, then folds the paper and passes it on.

The exuberance around new technology was especially palpable in Nam June Paik's tele-happening *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, which was broadcast on New Year's Day in 1984 by satellite to New York, Germany, South Korea, and Paris, and was watched by some 25 million people. Featuring artists such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Joseph Beuys, and Laurie Anderson, the event, a mash-up of live and pre-recorded material, was a joyous rebuttal of George Orwell's bleak vision of 1984.

LIKE PAIK, Allan Kaprow harbored idealistic notions about connecting the world. His 1969 video *Hello* connected participants on air in four different locations in a comedic display of confusion and delight as each repeatedly declares "Hello, I see you" when the transmission works.

But from 1994, five years after the invention of the World Wide Web, Paik's Internet Dream, featuring a wall of 52 blaring, discordant television monitors, appears to offer a more equivocal reading of developments in networking and data sharing. More explicit concerns about surveillance and the erosion of privacy could be found in works such as Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's 1992 on-screen eye, which tracked the visitor's movements around the gallery, and Addie Wagenknecht's chandelier sculpture Asymmetric Love (2013), composed of CCTV cameras and DSL cables. The title of the latter suggests we have entered into a Faustian pact with the state by allowing ourselves to be watched constantly in exchange for the nebulous promise of security.

"Reality will soon cease to be the standard by which to judge the imperfect image. Instead, the virtual image will become the standard by which to measure the imperfections of reality," the narrator says presciently in Harun Farocki's multi-screen installation Parallel I–IV (2012–14). This work deconstructs the ever more convincing virtual-reality environments of video games. Tracing a trajectory from Greek and Egyptian image making to the almost perfect mimesis of current computer technology, Farocki prompts questions about how such "progress" affects our perception of reality.



Olia Lialina, My Boyfriend Came Back from the War, 1996, screenshot, dimensions variable.

Digital technologies have also created new platforms for political art. In 2001 Mendi + Keith Obadike's work *Blackness for Sale* put Keith's black identity up for auction on eBay with warnings to the purchaser not to use the "blackness" in situations such as court cases or elections. The satirical work exposes the exoticizing of non-white races and cultures by a predominantly white art world, while highlighting the injustices disproportionately suffered by racial minorities.

In James Bridle's 2014 *Homo Sacer* a female hologram recites passages from international legislation on citizenship rights, underscoring the way governments and corporations increasingly impart vital information via automation and the disempowering effect this has on the individual.

Zach Blas, meanwhile, examines the theme of encroaching technological scrutiny in terms of the politics of queer culture. Fag Face Mask (2012), from his "Facial Weaponization Suite," consists of an amorphous pink mask constructed from the biometric data of various gay men, thwarting identification of any individual's features through facial-recognition software.

Similarly subversive is Trevor Paglen's minimalist sculpture *Autonomy Cube* (2014), created with the technologist and activist Jacob Appelbaum. It contains a host for several computers, creating a surveillance blind spot by routing traffic through Tor, a worldwide network of anonymous volunteer-run servers designed to conceal data. Museumgoers could use the hub to disappear off the grid and become complicit in this act of resistance against state and corporate snooping.

PAGLEN'S AUTONOMY CUBE was only one of several works in the show that used interactivity to explore the twilight zone between the real and the virtual. Mouchette (1996), for instance, is an avatar of a teenage artist, created by Martine Neddam. The character Mouchette has her own interactive website (www.mouchette.org) that has taken on a spontaneous life of its own in the Internet community, with many users unaware that the site is part of an artwork. In the gallery, one could sit at a terminal and roam Mouchette's gothic universe of blood-spattered images, throbbing music, and mystical symbols—and,

disturbingly, offer her advice on ways to commit suicide.

Ann Hirsch also broaches the theme of adolescent vulnerability online in her app work *Twelve* (2013), presented on a tablet. Seated at a young girl's bedroom desk, the visitor could voyeuristically observe the girl's participation in a chat room for 12-year-olds where she is preyed upon by an adult man.

One of the joys of the show was to be able to compare the current Net art with early interactive pieces, such as Lynn Hershman Leeson's groundbreaking installation *Lorna* (1979–84), centered on an agoraphobic female character. Immersed in a space decorated as Lorna's living room, the visitor used a remote control to determine Lorna's fate according to a variety of path options. Made with once-cutting-edge LaserDisc technology, the work remains impressive.

Another gem was Russian artist Olia Lialina's My Boyfriend Came Back from the War (1996), one of the founding works of Net art. An ambiguous interactive love story, My Boyfriend is told through a black-and-white browser screen divided into multiple HTML frames, which offer alternative



Installation view of "Electronic Superhighway (2016–1966)." 2016.

directions for the disjointed narrative. By clicking on these frames, users create their own versions of the tale within the parameters laid down by the artist.

NOT ALL THE works in the exhibition were the product of complicated technology; some employed traditional mediums while taking inspiration from the Internet's vast storehouse of information. Celia Hempton, for instance, presented intimate, expressive portraits in oil of strangers (most of them masturbating or stripping) that she met in a chat room and painted live during the chat.

The Egyptian artist Mahmoud Khaled photographed screenshots of a pick-up chat on the gay social network Grindr and developed them in a darkroom. It is as if by capturing these ephemeral online encounters in a traditional medium Khaled and Hempton are trying to give them some material permanence.

Elsewhere, the chaos of the information age was visualized by the painter Albert Oehlen in his ink-jet-printed canvas *Deathoknocko* (2001), which layers geometric shapes and computer graphics with oil-painted smears, drips, and lines.

Unlike Oehlen's abstract canvases, Oliver Laric's photorealist paintings of found Internet images in his *Versions (Missile Variations)*, 2010, question notions of authenticity and collective memory. These images created by the online community are variations on an Iranian hoax press photo from 2008 that was digitally altered to show four test missiles being launched.

GIVEN THE BREAKNECK pace of technological evolution, the soft- and hardware tools employed by artists are often outmoded almost as soon as the works are created. (E.A.T. performances, such as Frank Stella and Mimi Kanarek playing tennis with racquets fitted with contact microphones that switched lights on and off on impact with the ball, for example, now seem strangely clunky, though the works were radical for their time.)

Some artists have taken this as their focus. Jan Robert Leegte's 2001 triptych *Scrollbar Composition* consists of three geometric compositions featuring images of scroll bars from different generations of web browsers. Constant Dullaart created a wall installation, *Jennifer in Paradise* (2013–), around the

very first demo image supplied with early Photoshop software, which was widely manipulated by users and is now extinct online.

While some of the early videos in the show felt slow and dated in comparison with the sophistication of today's digital film, Peter Sedgley's shimmering paintings of concentric circles infused with kinetic lights and Stan VanDerBeek's computer animated "Poemfield" films—both from the late '60s and early '70s—still dazzled.

VanDerBeek created eight "Poemfield" works, two of which were shown in the exhibition, using one of the first computer animation languages, called Beflix (from Bell Labs Flicks), designed by Ken Knowlton at Bell Labs. With their vibrant geometric mosaics of flashing patterns and text accompanied by experimental music, these immersive installations felt startlingly modern, despite employing a long-gone software.

SUCH WORKS HELD their own in this exhibition. However, quieter mediums such as paintings, drawing, and sculpture struggled to compete for attention among all the blinking, buzzing, shouting art on display.

The mechanically created plotter drawings of veterans such as Vera Molnar and Manfred Mohr, for example, and Ulla Wiggen's pioneering paintings of the inner workings of early electronic devices, require a different environment to be fully appreciated.

Paradoxically, the main weakness of "Electronic Superhighway" was its vast scope; comprising many lengthy video, text, and interactive works, it demanded a big commitment of time and concentration. And, like browsing the web, it forced one to discriminate rapidly, which meant that most visitors missed out on compelling pieces, unless they returned several times. One left the exhibition overwhelmed by the multisensory assault.

Yet "Electronic Superhighway" was a brave, riveting attempt to chronicle living history. Its strength lay in its ability to offer bridges between past and present as artists adopt and challenge new technologies that are continually being updated. The exhibition provided a snapshot, both exhilarating and alarming, of life in today's tech fast lane, flagging the milestones passed en route. What was left unanswered was where we go from here.

ELIZABETH FULLERTON



Tatiana Kronberg, All Night Long, 2016, mixed-media installation, dimensions variable. Joan.

AROUND LOS ANGELES

he high-school bathroom is an essential site of drama in the canon of teen film and television, from My So-Called Life to Mean Girls. So too is it in Jennifer Reeder's surreal short movie Blood below the Skin (2015), which made its L.A. premiere at the CalArts REDCAT arts center on February 22. In the film, one high-school student (an angelic-looking blond with a boyfriend and a plan to wear a pink princess gown to the upcoming school dance) encounters another (this one less confident, less girlish, and prone to locking herself in her bedroom) by the bathroom stalls between class periods. One girl introduces herself as Joni, the other as Joan; in a scene of palpable sexual and nervous energy, they banter about their namesakes, from Joan Didion to Joan Jett.

In many ways, Joan and Joni are typical American suburban adolescents; while from disparate social circles, they share a name and, by implication, a common experience. But their invocation of the iconic Joans of pop culture highlights their aspiration to, and performance of, a feminine power that is far from generic.

In *Blood*, the mother of a third girl, Darby, shares with her daughter Joan Didion's adage "We tell ourselves stories in order to live." Didion is a California girl, a famous storyteller from a place famous for its storytellers. This mythos has seeped into the city's art galleries, where many recent shows were overwhelmingly narrative, character-driven, and dreamy.

West Adams's nonprofit space Joan, whose bathroom features photographs of Joan Didion and Joan Crawford,

presented Tatiana Kronberg's installation All Night Long. Kronberg made the piece in collaboration with Karina Precious Revlon—a skilled vogue performer with the fitting Internet handle "Elasticgirl"who danced in front of a 20-foot roll of black-and-white photo paper as Kronberg exposed it to strobe lights. In the resulting work, which the artist wove through real dance poles, Precious's flying limbs appear as abstract, billowing forms. Kronberg cites Man Ray's 1926 portraits of Ballet Russe members performing Romeo and Juliet as an inspiration, but while Romeo and Juliet is a story of boy-meets-girl, virginal love, Kronberg's work is rooted in the gay ballroom scene and the overtly sexual practice of pole dancing.

At Cherry and Martin in Culver City, Cinderella, Ericka Beckman's 30-minute





FROM TOP John Kayser, *Untitled*, 1965, original Kodak Kodacolor photograph, 3½" x 3½". Farago. Ashkan Honarvar, *King of worms - Growth*, 2015, hand-cut collage on found image, 9" x 6". CES.

film from 1986, played alongside an exhibition of its original props and related drawings and photographs. In Beckman's surrealist reimagining of the fairy talesomewhere on the aesthetic spectrum between vintage video game and black-box theatrical production—Cinderella, who toils as an ironsmith, receives a mysterious package containing a ball gown and learns she must be home by midnight (as represented by the recurring appearance of a clock tower). In the end, Cinderella realizes that she can simply disregard the clock and, in doing so, free herself from her curfew and all the other restrictions her gown implies. Breaking character, she escapes the boundaries of her role as unwitting princess.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN a cultural figure can no longer bear to read her assigned script? At Sade Gallery (named for the pop star), French artist Claire Tabouret's show "Because of You" included two circular paintings of Britney Spears with a partially shaved head, an image from the singer's very public 2007 breakdown during a fraught custody battle with ex-husband Kevin Federline. In these works, Tabouret shows Britney in the delicate transitional moment between teenage sweetheart and young-adult basket case. But, portrayed using soft brushwork and the template of classic portraiture, Britney doesn't look crazy; she looks resigned to this traumatic rite of passage, in which the child star loses her fans because she grew up and panicked. The idol is now a mutant.

L.A. has room for both, in abundance. "Women" at Farago surveyed the work of outsider photographer John Kayser, who took pictures of beautiful nude women in his home in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. Kayser often photographed his subjects from behind, their naked bottoms perched on a bouquet of flowers, a scattered deck of playing cards, or a man's (possibly the artist's own) head. These icons of the male gaze, visible through the gallery's all-glass storefront on a pedestrian street downtown, caught every passing eye. They drew in those who did not seek them out.

At nearby **CES Gallery**, by contrast, "Sometimes I Forget Myself," an exhibition of **Ashkan Honarvar**'s vibrant collages,



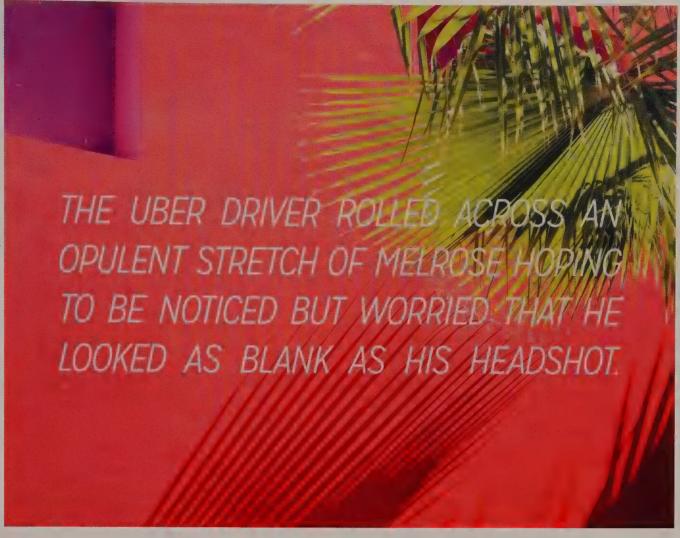
Jakob Kolding, "Another World with Difficulties," 2016, installation view. Team.



Ericka Beckman, Cinderella Game 1-4 (detail), 1986/2015, C-print, 16" x 20". Cherry and Martin.

showed us a set of erotic freaks. In Golden Lullaby (2015), a woman hangs suspended over rough seas. She is nude save for her white socks; her wrists and ankles are bound with rope; her belly is split open to make way for the emergence of an ornate golden egg. Her mouth seems to hang open with pleasure even as a fully clothed man weeps in the background. In Set 3 (2015), a glossy-skinned man squats with his legs open, penis resting on what appears to be a jeweled barrette in a swirl of blond hair. In The Divine 1 (2015), Honarvar infuses a heavily retouched image of a woman holding open her vagina with real corporeality by overlaying a skull onto her face and pink innards onto her chest.

IN EVE'S HOLLYWOOD, her 1974 memoir of growing up in L.A., former ingenue, artist, and muse Eve Babitz explains the disproportionate number of beautiful



Alex Israel and Bret Easton Ellis, The Uber Driver, 2016, acrylic and UV ink on canvas, 84" x 108". Gagosian.

girls in her high-school class: "People with brains went to New York and people with faces came West." Frank Gehry has been quoted as saying, "Tip the world on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles."

The city is big enough for everyone the starlets and the arguably even more glamorous misfits, all with a shared desire to be seen—and it's not just a backdrop. It's its own character. And as New York galleries rush to build West Coast outposts, it's interesting to see the ways that the city wills its influence onto them. At Team Gallery—a space best known for representing next-generation artists like Cory Arcangel and Ryan McGinley-the freestanding wooden cutouts of animals and (often dancing) people in Danish artist Jakob Kolding's solo show "Another World with Difficulties" alluded less to the Internet or youth culture than to

19th-century dioramas, carnival characters, and theater sets.

In an extreme example of this L.A. effect, Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills timed its exhibition of large collaborative paintings by artist Alex Israel and writer Bret Easton Ellis to open just before Oscar night. Set in a range of typefaces, Ellis's short texts march across Israel's found stock images of the L.A. landscape. Israel—whose first feature film, SPF-18, based on '80s teen films, will premiere later this year—had the paintings (actually ink-jet prints on canvas) fabricated at Warner Bros. by a crew trained in Hollywood set production. The works are ripe with narratives about trying to make it here. (The gallery's press materials call the show "a surreal film pitch," and I don't disagree.) The image in Born and Not Made (2016), for example, is a terrazzo floor with the shadow of a palm tree falling

over it, while the text reads, IN LOS ANGELES I KNEW SO MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE ASHAMED THAT THEY WERE BORN AND NOT MADE. In the show's strongest piece, the words I'M GOING TO BE A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF STAR hover in the night sky above the illuminated downtown skyline.

Describing the allegorical, Old Masterstyle photographic portraits in her current exhibition at UCLA's Hammer Museum (on view through May 22), Catherine Opie said, "Very few of the subjects look back at you. This one [series] is all about being able to gaze upon." How can anyone become a different kind of star in a culture of excess and celebrity? What does it take to be gazed upon? Perhaps one shaves one's head, or releases a golden egg from one's stomach, or sits nude on a man's face. There are many ways to dream in Los Angeles.

EMILY RAPPAPORT



My Father Plays Piano in a House of Ill Repute, 1966, oil on canvas, 77" x 118".

WILLIAM N. COPLEY

MENIL COLLECTION, HOUSTON, TEXAS
THROUGH JULY 24

busy black-and-white painting hanging at the end of a lightfilled corridor in one of the most serene museum exhibition spaces in the world depicts a man in a tweed suit and bowler hat. The man has evidently been playing piano; now he spins on his stool to reach for the curvaceous nude woman lying on a nearby bed. The man and woman's faceless, cartoonlike figures are boldly limned in with broken black lines. An eye-popping variety of patterning stripes for the wallpaper, speckles for the bed's counterpane, flowers for the carpet, staccato dashes for wood grain, tweed, and ribbon—fills the canvas from edge to edge. Walls, floors, furniture, and couple undulate as if they, or we, were a little bit drunk.

Titled My Father Plays Piano in a House of Ill Repute, the painting is a classic image from 1966 by William N. Copley

(1919–96), the heterodox American artist who signed his works CPLY and whose trademark motif was a randy, buttoned-up everyman who pursues life, liberty, and zaftig blonds while being pursued in turn by angry wives and policemen. The scion of a wealthy family, Copley began to paint in the late 1940s, developing a vernacular that combined the decorativeness of Matisse's canvases with the graphic punch of *Krazy Kat*-creator George Herriman's cartoons and the multidimensional space of Mexican murals. Still woefully under known, he is only now having his first survey in the United States.

Recently conditions have come together to make an American retrospective of Copley's work seem not only relevant, but inevitable—among them: a widespread interest in self-taught artists; a groundswell of figurative painting by younger artists,

many of them looking back to the Chicago Imagists of the 1960s, to Peter Saul, and also to Copley; the 100th anniversary of Dada; a particularly surreal election cycle; and most importantly, a curator intrigued by the artist's long connection with Dominique and John de Menil, whose private collection forms the bulk of the Menil's holdings and who owned no fewer than 17 of Copley's paintings and drawings.

"The World According to CPLY," initiated by Menil curator Tony Kamps, brings together over 100 drawings, paintings, and sculptures made by the artist between 1946 and 1995. With its major holdings of Surrealist objects, the Menil makes a fitting venue for the work of a man who considered himself a natural surrealist. The show, largely chronological with thematic insertions, is full of surprises, even for those already crazy for Copley. Without in any



En Garde, 1962, oil and lace on canvas, 32" x 25¾".

way downplaying his work's vaudevillian humor, the exhibition brings to light his often-neglected formal and conceptual strengths.

A PATRON, COLLECTOR, sometime publisher, and artist, Copley was born in New York City. Abandoned as an infant, he was adopted at the age of two by the Chicago and San Diego newspaper magnate Ira C. Copley and his wife Edith. (The essential randomness of the universe was an early life lesson.) He attended Yale and fought in World War II, seeing action in Africa and Italy. Following the war, Copley returned

to California to work as a reporter for his father's newspapers, which included the right-wing San Diego Union-Tribune. Copley liked writing, and carried his press card for the rest of his life, but things were strained between him and his conservative family—he was by then a committed leftist. A brother-in-law, John Ployardt, who had studied painting and who worked for Disney, introduced Copley to Surrealism. "Surrealism," Copley would later write, "made everything understandable: my genteel family, the war, and why I attended the Yale prom without my shoes."

In 1948 Copley and Ployardt started a

gallery in Beverly Hills. They gave oneperson shows to René Magritte, Yves
Tanguy, Roberto Matta, Joseph Cornell,
Max Ernst, and Man Ray. Nothing sold,
and the gallery closed after six months.
Having guaranteed the artists sales of 10
percent, Copley wound up buying many of
the unsold works, the first acquisitions in
what would become a legendary collection
of Surrealist art. (When he put the collection up for auction in 1979, Dominique
de Menil snapped up eleven masterpieces
—including Ernst's magnificent Le surreálism et la peinture of 1942—which are
on view in nearby galleries.)

At this point, encouraged by Man Ray, who was then unhappily living in Hollywood, Copley began to make art himself. One of the revelations of the show is how assured his style was from the beginning; it remained substantially unchanged throughout his career, even as he continued to refine it. Four works hung adjacent to one another here represent the basic elements of his visual language, soon to be melded into a durable and highly individual patois: Mack n Madge (1962), a cartoon strip depicting the travails of an ill-fated couple; Mexican Images (Dream of Oaxaca), 1948, a canvas divided into quadrants, each bearing the image of an object from a Mexican street market; Reclining Nude (1953), a woman in stockings and a negligee whose bare mattress and bidet testify to her trade; and Fiesta de la Lune (1957), a swirling, jumbled composition of flags, television sets, cigarette packs, a skeleton, and other items, which suggests the clamor and speed of modern life.

By 1951, though, America appeared to be a dead end for Copley. Figuration was out, and abstraction and Abstract Expressionism were ascendant. His gallery had failed, and his marriage was failing. Leaving his wife and two children behind, Copley sailed with Man Ray to Paris. He was 30 years too late for the heyday of Surrealism and a full generation younger than the Surrealists—many of whom had by then returned to Europe—but he counted artists such as Man Ray, Magritte, and Marcel Duchamp as friends, and they encouraged his naive style. He stayed in Paris for eleven years, painting and filing articles on life there for the Tribune.

WHILE LIVING IN PARIS, Copley found his great subject: the world's fundamental absurdity, which he conveyed in "ridiculous images" using his now-characteristic technique of line drawings filled in with bright, patchy color. As Kamps writes in his catalogue essay, "Refusing to intellectualize Surrealism, Copley borrowed aspects of its interest in humor, sexuality and psychology. But he replaced the movement's uncanny with his own sense of the carnivalesque."

"The commedia dell'arte is a universal form," Copley told critic Alan Jones in a 1991 interview, "using the same characters time and time again—a jumping-off place for almost anything. And the same thing always happens, as in Petrouchka. I had never paid much attention to the commedia dell'arte, but when I did I realized that it was where I had been all the time."

An inexhaustible supply of comedic images could be found in the relations between men and women. (Copley himself was married six times.) "In my commedia," he noted, "it is always about being 'taken in adultery." An early gem addressing the subject is A la mer (Remember my Member), a work from circa 1960 depicting a lighthouse at night. As the light moves over the beach, it pins several startled couples in its glare.

In formal terms, Copley began to experiment with collage-inspired compositions like Fiesta as a method of conveying simultaneity and flux. Often the central image in these works is an automobile, for him a symbol for movement through space, time, and life. On one wall three paintings are hung together: Liberation sur l'herbe (1955), in which a blue sedan, seen from both the inside and the outside, coils itself around a city park; The Accident (1983), involving a car, a man, and a woman seen before and after a bloodless wreck-presumably of both the car and the liaison—and Temptation of Saint Ouen (Gaité Bienvenue), 1956, with a bus and a dead horse at its center. It is groupings such as these that make this show so good, illuminating as they do Copley's methodical thinking-through of ideas over time.

In Paris, Magritte, especially, was a mentor. As Kamps writes, "The bowlerhatted, umbrella-equipped men that recur throughout Copley's work are homages to



La Muerticita, 1984, acrylic on linen, 60½" x 45".

his Belgian friend and ironic emblems of the traditional bourgeois paths that both artists sidestepped."

Yet, in his 2000 essay "Magritte and the Bowler Hat," film theorist Peter Wollen challenges the notion of the bowler hat (originally commissioned by a British landowner for his gamekeepers in 1849) as an emblem of the everyman, insisting instead, and at length, on its multitude of cultural associations, including the detective (Hercule Poirot), the comedian

(Charlie Chaplin), the Purist (Le Corbusier), the father (in the works of Samuel Beckett), and the fetish (on women, in works from *Cabaret* to *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*). And in much the same way, as this show reveals, Copley's simple narratives, with their small cast of characters, are not just "ridiculous images," but the vehicles for trenchant commentary on repressive social conventions, dirty politics, misguided nationalism, moral hypocrisy, and coyness of any sort.



The Cold War, 1962, oil on canvas, 351/4" x 511/4".

ON HIS RETURN to America in 1962, Copley found Pop art on the rise and his work—incorporating images taken from the mass media, but more loosely painted, more narrative, and more personal than that of Lichtenstein or Warhol—viewed as a link between Pop and Surrealism. America of the 1960s also provided a wealth of new material for paintings such as *The Cold War* (1962), which shows a pair of women wrestlers in a tight lock, one wrapped in the American flag, the other in the flag of the USSR.

In 1968 Copley launched another ill-fated business venture—the limited-edition magazine S.M.S. (short for Shit Must Stop), which published multiples by such disparate artists as Ray Johnson, Lee Lozano, and Walter De Maria. It lost money and ceased publication after six

issues. It was also around this time that Copley embarked on two of the most extraordinary series of his career: the "Nouns" and the "X-Rated" paintings.

The non-narrative "Nouns," based on images from vintage Sears and Roebuck catalogues, depict ordinary consumer goods set against brightly colored, patterned grounds. The similarly non-narrative "X-Rated" paintings, based on images from hard-core porn magazines, show couples having sex on brightly colored, patterned beds, sofas, and floors. In the first series, a boxing glove takes on the aura of a fetish, while the relations between a French horn and a piano stool have a carnal flavor. In the second series, the eroticism of the images is overshadowed by their gorgeous hues and over-the-top decorativeness, as

in a painting of a man (in a '70s patterned shirt) and a woman (in a lacy bodysuit) entangled in the corner of a sofa—whose green-and-white plaid upholstery is having a three-way of its own with blue flowered wallpaper and orange diamond-patterned carpeting. As Kamps writes, "Despite the series' frank focus on genitals and sex acts—firsts in his career—[Copley] argued that the inanimate objects in the Nouns paintings were far more arousing. The X-Rated works, he stated, 'are essentially still lifes: they are flowers."

In works from the 1980s and 1990s Copley continued to innovate, using text (the IBM "think" slogan was a favorite), cutaways, and silhouettes filled with imagery to create increasingly layered compositions. "Lately I've changed my way of working by trying



Rain, 1973, acrylic on linen, 381/4" x 511/2".

to depend much more on the subconscious," he said in his interview with Jones. "I start a painting and just leave it. I know there is bound to be some subconscious event, so I don't stand and worry what to do next. I walk away from it. This was a big step for me. It got me away from my own formulas."

In retrospect, though, Copley's work seems far from formulaic. One of the show's few missteps is the characterization of Copley as a "bad boy" artist, an idea that is floated in one of the catalogue's essays. The term, which emerged in the 1980s in connection with a certain kind of swagger and scale, seems to have little to do with Copley's low profile and behind-the-scenes patronage of

other artists through his Cassandra Foundation and projects like S.M.S. Neither does it particularly apply to his art. While Copley frequently returned to the faceless characters of the blond and her bandylegged suitor, works like 1963's The Bride and the Groom Stripped Bare by Each Other, Even—in which scenes of men and women primping for each other alternate with images of common objects—evoke not casual encounters but the complicated dynamics of real-world relationships. As seen here, Copley's work has as many affinities with that of certain women artists, among them Evelyne Axell, Christina Ramberg, Judith Linhares, Kara Walker, Anthea Hamilton, and Jamian

Juliano-Villani, as it does with that of his male Pop and Surrealist contemporaries.

That this exhibition will only travel to one other venue (the Prada Foundation in Milan) is disappointing, but perhaps not surprising. Among the seeming impediments to other American museums embracing Copley's work are the fear of being politically incorrect, the premium on technique, and the distrust of humor in art. Kamps's courageous and important survey illuminates both the consistency and the sophistication of Copley's vision and most importantly—especially to younger artists who might look at his work now—its truthfulness to itself.

ANNE DORAN



Geta Brătescu, Stari cittadine, 1971, collage and drawing on paper, 11" x 1634". Galerie Barbara Weiss.

AROUND BERLIN

rom a show of mixed-media collages by Carol Rama, who died last year at age 97, to an installation involving furniture, video, and fruit by 26-year-old Bunny Rogers, exhibitions of art by women were a silent majority in Berlin's galleries this spring. While conversations across continents focused on American politicians seeking to harness essentialist concepts of gender and pitting generations of feminists against one other, there was a remarkable lack of fanfare in Berlin about this diverse intergenerational array of female artists. Berlin, a city where women earn more than men, according to a recent government compensation survey, is also an environment where their power is presented confidently and as a matter of fact.

Loose-limbed figuration was one of the

few commonalities among these shows. The slinkiest works were the large-scale canvases and drawings from the 1960s by Pop artist Kiki Kogelnik at König Galerie. These featured bodies and body parts adrift among, and subsumed by, the patterns and shapes surrounding them. Her Portrait of an Attractive Man (1964) shows a mass of bodies—each one a single eyepopping color, like lime green, teal, or bubble-gum-being drawn in the same direction, as if by a force outside the painting's frame. Also from 1964 is Hand from Outer Space, in which a disembodied arm with a fluorescent yellow hand reaches into a petri dish-like object filled with colored dots. Hanging on the gallery's exposed brick walls, the pieces seemed like portals into a gravity-less, alternate reality where gender-neutral beings float in pleasurable

freedom from social, sexual, and political contexts.

In contrast to Kogelnik's paintings, as well as to her own better known, sexually explicit work (once censored by the Italian government), Carol Rama's abstract mixed-media canvases at Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie said as much about mortality as they did about sex. Most of the pieces here, made between the 1960s and Rama's death, utilize rubber—salvaged from the artist's father's bike repair shop in Turin—fixed to plain gessoed canvases. Austere geometric compositions, they are nevertheless erotically evocative. The 1970 rubber-and-oil painting Spazio anche più che tempo (Space Even More Than Time), for instance, shows an abstract form curling like a penis against a thigh. But the rubber itself speaks about more

morbid concerns: the beautifully decaying material in shades of brown and black has cracked and thinned like aging skin. This association was underscored by **Bepi Ghiotti**'s photographs of the elderly artist in her studio on view at **Eden Eden**.

Dematerialization is also a concern for Geta Brătescu, whose collages and drawings from the 1970s joined works from the past few years at Galerie Barbara Weiss. Since the 1960s Brătescu has been, in her words, "drawing with scissors." Stari Cittadine (1971), a moody drawing with collage elements, has the emotional impact of a sketch taken from life. It consists of a paper-clip box's label and a cluster of crudely drawn men and women set in a dark interior, as if isolated, despondent drinkers in a smoky bar. Equally evocative is the 2006 collage Artistul, showing a stiff, robotic personage contemplating a grid filled with sinuous line drawings, as if it were an album of pictures of himself in nimbler times.

SIMILARLY MOBILE FIGURES populate the unconstrained paintings of Melike Kara, a recent art-school graduate. "In Your Presence," Kara's show of gestural paintings on canvas and glass screens at Peres Projects, featured scenes resembling stills from contemporary ballet. In them, male figures gracefully contort their bodies in otherwise empty space like dancers using their movements to express emotional and social exchanges. In contrast to Kogelnik's free spirits, Kara's figures are social creatures placed in absurd situations: one vanks a noose around another's neck as a conversation continues nearby; one does a backflip as two others embrace. Although their blocky bodies differ from the svelte physiques of real dancers, their interactions recall stark scenes composed by postmodern choreographers such as Wayne McGregor, as well as the situational unease in Brătescu's drawings and collages. At the same time, the set-like arrangement of painted glass panels alerted viewers to their own physicality as they moved through the show.

At Carlier Gebauer gallery, Australian artist Jessica Rankin's embroidered maps of the night sky on a personally important date created an emotional push/pull.



Kiki Kogelnik, M, ca. 1964, oil and acrylic on canvas, 80" x 561/4". König Galerie.

By charting the stars' position on a night with strong subjective significance for her, Rankin is suggesting that they aligned for her, yet her private life remains inaccessible to us, the viewers. We are drawn in, only to be rebuffed.

This unfulfilled promise of secrets revealed is mirrored in the group of giant

free-standing, inflatable plastic sculptures by the relatively young British artists Anthea Hamilton and Nicholas Byrne that comprise "LOVE IV: Cold Shower" at Schinkel Pavillon. The pair have been collaborating on inflatables since 2012; this most recent group, printed with images from tourist souvenirs, objects from



Installation view of Anthea Hamilton and Nicholas Byrne's "LOVE IV: Cold Shower," 2016. Schinkel Pavillon.

art history (such as Brancusi's *Male Torso*, 1917), and everyday things like a bunch of black grapes, evokes an unspoken dialogue between a man and a women.

The sculptures are imposing but quiver slightly, which makes them approachable. However, the significance of their imagery is opaque to anyone but the duo who created them. In a transcript—with redacted passages—of a meandering conversation between the two artists, they express anxieties about their work and confess to not remembering the meaning of their references. Reading it—and viewing the sculptures—evokes the pleasure of eavesdropping: to feel a moment of stolen intimacy with a stranger without his or her knowledge, and to extrapolate fantasies from whatever tidbit is overheard.

Conversely, miscommunication seemed like the subject of *Double Bind* (2015),

Miriam Visaczki's sculpture of two interlocked heads in the group show "Sex and the City" at Croy Nielsen. The handwoven felt-and-wire faces both have beards and red lipstick. One puckers up a kiss and envelops the other in a white beard while its green-haired counterpart turns away with an expression of disgust.

Hidden narratives also animated Almut Heise's tight, cinematic, representational paintings in her 40-year retrospective at Galerie Michael Haas. Some are apparently portraits of real people; others pass for illustrations of characters. Many of the works—made between the 1960s and the present—show couples and groups of women friends in close physical proximity but looking away from one another, clearly adrift in their own private thoughts. Ironically, the most emotionally accessible of Heise's subjects are the solitary women

she repeatedly shows scrutinizing their reflections in bathroom mirrors with interest and calm self-assurance.

Bunny Rogers, whose work often reflects a keen awareness of being young and beautiful, revisited Internet mythologizing of the Columbine High School massacre in her solo show at Société Berlin. (It was also the subject of her previous show at the gallery in 2014.) Rogers's position as an Internet-savvy artist gives "Columbine Library"—a meditation on collective memory, friendship, and alcohol —authenticity while not limiting her perspective to pure subjectivity. Without any overt discussion of how, or even whether, the personal is political, Rogers and her predecessors explore relationships between bodies, modes of communication. and women and the wider world.

ANA FINEL HONIGMAN



Installation view of "xylañynu. taller de los viernes," 2016, showing sculptures by Gabriel Kuri. Kurimanzutto.

AROUND MEXICO CITY

he 1990s in Mexico City saw not only an economic bubble and subsequent collapse of the peso, increasing narco violence, intractable government corruption, and rising income inequality, but also the emergence of a vibrant alternative art scene. In neo-conceptualist work that often alluded to the turbulent political, social, and economic landscape of Mexico City during that decade, artists such as Luis Felipe Ortega, Eduardo Abaroa, Damián Ortega, and Minerva Cuevas subverted existing nationalistic and institutional art practices, often with daring and humor. Operating outside the margins of an art world into which even canonical works and texts of the modern era had still not filtered, this "post earthquake" generation of artists opened artist-

run spaces and organized exhibitions in homes, markets, and abandoned buildings, where they could show, and show each other, their work.

Since the end of the 1990s, several exhibitions—including 2002's "Mexico City: An Exhibition about the Exchange Rates of Bodies and Values" at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York and last year's "Strange Currencies: Art and Action in Mexico City, 1990-2000" at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphiahave reconsidered Mexico City's art scene of the 1990s. Over the past two years, alternative galleries-including the former Preteen Gallery and the currently active Lulu, Lodos, and Casa Maauad spaces whose independent ethos conjures the improvised venues of 30 years ago, have popped up all over the city. Rarely is the thread of influence from one generation of creators to the next seen as clearly as it is in the recent history of Mexican contemporary art.

THE LATEST CONTRIBUTION to this narrative of influence was a group exhibition at Kurimanzutto Gallery. Titled "xylañynu. taller de los viernes" the show reunited five artists—Gabriel Orozco, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Damián Ortega, Gabriel Kuri, and Jerónimo Lopez (a.k.a. Dr. Lakra)—who met weekly between 1987 and 1992 to view and critique one another's work. The Friday Workshop (Taller de los viernes), as the meetings were called, was emblematic of the do-it-yourself culture of Mexico City's alternative scene of the 1990s. What the exhibition's curator Guillermo Santamarina calls an "unbreakable courage of



Installation view of "xylañynu. taller de los viernes," 2016, showing works by Damián Ortega. Kurimanzutto.

experimentation with materials, supports and work models or of connection/situation" set a new precedent for communal learning and offered new models of art production and distribution.

An illuminating essay by María Minera that accompanied the show describes the influence that Orozco, older by some ten years, had on his cohorts, and the methods by which the group attempted to expand

on European and Latin American conceptual art of the 1970s. As Ortega explains, "Step by step we understood the political weight of the elements that make up a work, and so gradually we all abandoned pictorial representation to materialize it as cultural, sculptural objects that questioned traditional readings and meanings."

"Xylañynu" operated with the same playfulness and disregard for the traditional forms of art making and presentation that these artists embodied in the 1990s. This exhibition was not an homage to a generation, but rather a catching up—something akin to a school reunion, if you will—among artists who Santamarina, in his curatorial essay for the show, likens to the light-fingered protagonist of Robert Bresson's 1959 film *Pickpocket*.

AN ABSURDIST SENSIBILITY was evident from the moment one approached the gallery's entrance, which was partially blocked by an old car painted lime green and pastel pink by Cruzvillegas. It was reminiscent of the ones that clunk along the streets of Mexico City, cobbled together with spare parts and looking like they could fall apart at any given moment. It was a remarkably perfect fit for the entryway, which brings us to yet another commonality between the artists: their work's inseparability from the context of Mexico City's urban landscape, where space is a commodity not taken for granted and improvisation is a necessity.

The exhibition continued in Kurimanzutto's main courtyard, where Ortega blurred street art and fine art with Physical Graffiti 5 and Physical Graffiti 6 (both 2015), graffiti "paintings" made from rebar that floated off the walls. Set in the middle of the courtyard, a quartet of Kuri's brightly painted modular steel sculptures—all four titled This, Please and dating from 2010—initially appeared clean, minimal, and, to continue Santamarina's metaphor of the pickpocket, outwardly "socially correct." But the works are deceiving; each sculpture has been intentionally defiled by numerous cigarette butts put out directly on it.

Invoking Foucault's theory of cynical parrhesia, Santamarina writes that while sharing aspects of philosophical parrhesia, or the obligation to speak the truth, its variant also allows "inaccuracy, double meanings, ambiguous humor, and even the exaltation of irony." These qualities were in evidence in the main gallery, where works by Orozco, Dr. Lakra, Ortega, and Kuri comprised the bulk of the exhibition. Ortega's *Paisagem* (2015), a four-walled structure built of polystyrene with a hole ripped out of one of the

walls and the remaining residue left to scatter throughout the gallery, shared the space with Orozco's *Blind Signs* (2013), an installation of tempered-glass panels with patterns of circles painted on them in black. Unlike Ortega's structure, which uses a light material to create weight and volume, Orozco's heavy glass panels become weightless negative space surrounding the painted forms. On nearby walls pages from vintage girlie magazines to which inked silhouettes of human figures have been added and a collection of vintage record albums reflected Dr. Lakra's fascination with fetishism.

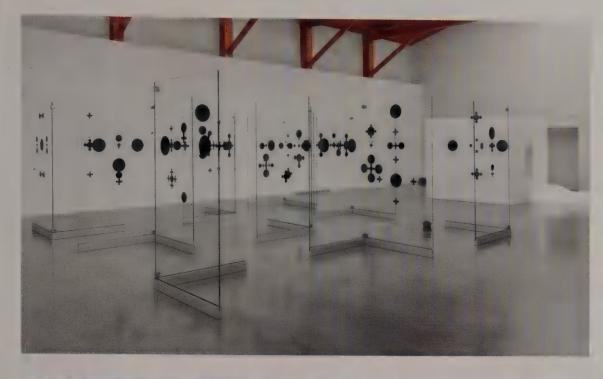
IT IS TELLING THAT this exhibition took place in a gallery that many say legitimized Mexico City on the international art map. Much Mexican art of the 1990s offered a regional perspective on subjects—including identity politics, the digital revolution, and a new world order—that consumed artists of that era around the globe, and it found its way onto the global art scene that was emerging at the same time. Kurimanzutto, originally a project-based, experimental, roving art space, now, paradoxically, has become a symbol of the commercial success of Mexican contemporary art.

Regardless, Kurimanzutto continues to support experimental projects by emerging artists and curators, most recently a yearlong series of shows in the gallery's project room organized by independent curator and writer Chris Sharp. For "Every forest madly in love with the moon has a highway crossing it from one side to the other," a solo show of new work by Mexican-born artist Rodrigo Hernández, the walls of the space were painted bright yellow, orange, electric blue, and deep purple. On each wall hung mysterious glyphs made of metal. The references here were Mexican artist and ethnologist Miguel Covarrubias's illustrations for his seminal 1957 book Indian Art of Mexico and Central America, and Italian Futurist painting. Like those of the artists in Kurimanzutto's main gallery, Hernández's works are ambiguous, toeing the line between hieroglyphics and abstracted forms.

THE INFLUENCE OF Kurimanzutto and its stable of artists can be seen in the "project-space revival" that has sprung up in



ABOVE Rodrigo Hernández, *Vida interior*, 2015, pâpier-maché, wood, lack, and India ink, 26¾" x 15". Kurimanzutto. Opposite, from top Installation view of "xylañynu. taller de los viernes," 2016, showing Gabriel Orozco's *Blind Signs*, 2013. Kurimanzutto. Chantal Peñalosa, *Hemeroteca* (Newspaper Library), 2015, newspaper and window panes, dimensions variable, installation view. Casa Maauad. Installation view of "Chantal Peñalosa: El panorama, sobre todo si uno lo ve desde un puente, es prometedor," 2016. Proyectos Monclova.







Mexico City of late, where artists and curators are once again creating their own centers of conversation, convergence, and practice.

One of the most important of these new spaces is **Casa Maauad**, a residency project whose mission is to nurture relationships between visiting and local artists. Occupying a colonial building in the up-and-coming neighborhood of San Rafael, it has hosted over 50 artists since it opened five years ago.

During her residency at Casa Maauad, artist **Chantal Peñalosa** created an installation titled *Mañana*, *Mañana* about her hometown of Tecate, Mexico, and its stagnation. Sandwiched between Plexiglas panels that wound through the exhibition space, a collection of newspapers rescued the memory of Tecate's once-thriving main plaza, where a promised economic tomorrow has yet to arrive.

Indeed, the future as something that perennially slips through one's fingers is a subject that Peñalosa explores frequently. For her solo project at **Proyectos Monclova**, "El Panorama, sobre todo si uno lo ve desde un puente, es prometedor" (The View, Especially If One Looks at It from a Bridge, Is Promising), Peñalosa filled the gallery space with the installation piece *La idea de un millón de pesos* (The Idea of a Million Pesos, 2016).

The work consists of the artist's rubbings of coins, 14 pesos worth to a sheet, on letter-size pieces of paper. The 3,000 finished sheets in the exhibition represent a mere fraction of the number necessary to depict one million pesos.

Over the course of the last three years the Mexican peso has devalued significantly. Peñalosa's ambition to arrive at one million pesos, in terms of the symbolic worth of the money, is thus a hopeless task.

With their references to Mexico's social and physical fabric, Peñalosa's installations build on the work of the neoconceptualists of the 1990s, while Casa Maauad and Proyectos Monclova continue the '90s tradition of providing a space for artists to create and converse. Currently, the conversation in Mexico City is about history and mentorship.

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THE TRANSFORMING TATE

From its beginnings in 1897, when it had but one modest site in London housing a small collection of British artworks, to the present, Tate Gallery has grown to boast four venues—London's Tate Britain and Tate Modern, as well as Tate Liverpool and Tate St. Ives—and some 70,000 works, dating from 1500 to the present. It's been on an often controversial roll, culminating in the June 17 debut of its Herzog & de Meuron—designed extension to the architects' 2000 rendition of the Bankside Power Station, home of Tate Modern and its famous Turbine Hall. Earlier this year, Frances Morris, a longtime curator at Tate, was appointed the new director of Tate Modern. Over the past century ARTnews has tracked the Tate's evolution. Below are observations from our pages.

—THE EDITORS

1889

HENRY TATE'S DONATION OF HIS COLLECTION LEADS TO A SEARCH FOR A NEW MUSEUM, SEPARATE FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY, TO HOUSE BRITISH ART.

1897

TATE GALLERY, AS IT WAS THEN KNOWN, OFFICIALLY OPENS AT THE MILLBANK LOCATION, WHICH WOULD UNDERGO VARIOUS EXPANSIONS AND RESTORATIONS IN THE ENSUING YEARS.

1917

TATE GALLERY BEGINS FORMING THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL MODERN ART.

NOV. 14, 1931

Art lovers are experiencing considerable inconvenience, reports *The Morning Post*, as a result of the increasing congestion of pictures at the Tate Gallery.... Every month four or five fresh works of art are brought into the Tate Gallery and require additional space.

—"The Tate Gallery Overcrowded"



Exterior view of Tate Britain, which was the first of the institution's four venues.

1955

TATE GALLERY BECOMES ITS OWN INSTITUTION, INDEPENDENT OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

SEPTEMBER 1964

"It was in the last days of July that Mr. Norman Reid was chosen to succeed Sir John Rothenstein as Director of the Tate Gallery.... Mr. Reid has never, to my knowledge, published a line of art-criticism; nor has he committed himself, in his official capacity, to any one particular point of view. If he has strong opinions, he has loyally suppressed them. It is reasonable to infer that the selection committee counted this in his favor when his qualifications were weighed against those of Mr. [Bryan] Robertson, who has committed himself over and over again at Whitechapel, or of Mr. [Lawrence] Gowing, who has vivid and idiosyncratic opinions to offer on everything from Masaccio to Marisol."

-"London," by John Russell

MARCH 1961

Logical as it may have been to have the Seurat *Baignade* under the same roof as the National Gallery Poussins, the migration will throw upon the Tate's twentieth-century holdings a weight which they are at present quite unable to bear. Neither in the Tate, nor in English private collections, are there European twentieth-century pictures to compare with the resources even of quite small cities like Basle, Berne and Zurich. During and after the war chance after chance of buying such pictures was let slip; those chances will not now recur.

-"Art news from London," by John Russell

MARCH 1960

"There is no such thing in the British Isles as a modern museum building, in this sense, and it would be rash to suppose that when the Tate at last gets its long-promised northward extension we shall see a revolution in museum-construction comparable to that which has occurred, over the last hundred years, in the character of museum-art."

—"The Tate and the Future," by John Russell

1984

THE TURNER PRIZE, NAMED AFTER BRITISH PAINTER J. M. W. TURNER, WHO GAVE A LARGE PORTION OF HIS INVENTORY TO THE TATE, IS FIRST AWARDED. THE PRIZE WOULD GO ON TO STIR MUCH CONTROVERSY OVER THE YEARS.

1988

TATE LIVERPOOL OPENS IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND. IT IS THE FIRST OF THE VARIOUS SATELLITE CAMPUSES THAT WOULD COME TO FORM THE EXPANDED TATE MUSEUMS.

SUMMER 1990

On January 24 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher looked around her at the rearranged rooms of London's Tate Gallery. She smiled, commended director Nicholas Serota's "genius," and said, "We have a task as government to try to keep these great galleries going with the help of the taxpayers." Then she delivered what almost sounded like a pledge of commitment. "It's not enough to conserve the heritage. We have to enlarge it before we pass it on."

- "Remaking the Tate," by William Feaver

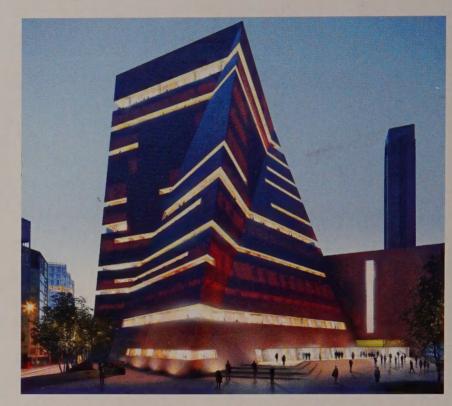
MARCH 1993

The Tate Gallery has announced plans to construct a new home for its collection of modern and contemporary art by the end of the century.... [Chairman of Tate trustees Dennis] Stevenson said the museum's decision was prompted by several factors, including the conspicuous absence of a major modern art museum in London and an "acceptance of and concern about the criticism of the Tate that we only show a small amount of our works."

—"Updating the Tate," by Jeffrey Kastner



The Bankside Power Station prior to its conversion to Tate Modern.



Southern exterior view of the newly completed expansion to Tate Modern.

FEBRUARY 2013

[Chris] Dercon has been on the job at Tate since April 2011, and in that time he has applied his "mixing" dictum diligently. Under his aegis, the underground oil tanks of the former power station have been opened up as dedicated spaces for performance, film, and installation, and Tate has embarked on a major drive to acquire and exhibit recent African artworks as part of a more international focus. The 54-year-old Belgian has said his mission is to radically rethink the role of the museum in the 21st century. . . .

... He envisages the Tate of the future as a beacon of learning akin to the ancient library of Alexandria.

— "Tate Director Chris Dercon: 'Everything Can Be Changed," by Elizabeth Fullerton

TATE MODERN ANNOUNCES AN EXPANSION OF ITS CURRENT SPACE BY HERZOG & DE MEURON, TO BE COMPLETED IN 2016.

2009

JANUARY 2005

Britain's Tate Gallery recently made an extraordinary public appeal, asking artists and private collectors to donate works of art in order to build up the museum's collection

... The Tate is aiming to acquire 100 donated works of art to build an acquisitions fund in the range of £50 million—£100 million (\$95 million—\$190 million) over the next ten years.

— "Tate Acquires without Spending," by Sarah Sennott

TATE MODERN, LOCATED AT A FORMER POWER STATION ON THE BANK OF THE THAMES, OPENS TO THE PUBLIC.

2000

MICHAEL ROSENFELD GALLERY TO PRESENT

Alfonso Ossorio

Congregations
September 10 - October 29, 2016

Benny Andrews

The Bicentennial SeriesNovember 5, 2016 – January 14, 2017

Nancy Grossman

The 1960s

Frieze Masters: Spotlight 2016

London, England October 6-9, 2016





